PRIEST OR OCCULTIST?

THE SECRET LIFE OF MONTAGUE SUMMERS

THREE WHEELS GOOD NIGERIAN MAN TURNS INTO TRICYCLE

BEYOND THE FRINGE DONALD TRUMP AND LEFT-FIELD SCIENCE

AURORAL AUDIO LISTENING TO THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

THE WORLD'S WEIRDEST NEWS

OGRES EXORCISED • SPECTRAL PHOTOBOMBS • HUMBER MONSTER • ALLERGIC TO WATER

THE WORLD OF STRANGE PHENOMENA
WWW.FORTEANTIMES.COM

ForteanTimes

FT349 JANUARY 2017 £4.25

SORCERERS SUPREME

MAGIC AND ORIENTALISM FROM ALEXANDER THE CRYSTAL SEER TO DOCTOR STRANGE

EASTERN APOCALYPSE

RUSSIA'S PROPHETS OF EURASIAN SUPREMACY

I SEE DEAD PEOPLE

MEAT LOAF CONTACTS THE SPIRIT WORLD

SPOOKY STATIONS

THE GHOST NOW ARRIVING ON PLATFORM TWO...

9 770308 589224 01

iPad
3:00 AM
Horror in Culture & Entertainment
RUE MORGUE
Let's Scare Jessica To Death
DIRECTOR JOHN HANCOCK LOOKS BACK AT HIS 45-YEAR-OLD HORROR HEAD TRIP
173 DECEMBER 2016 CAN/US $9.95
MARRS MEDIA INC. RUE-MORGUE.COM
PLEASE DISPLAY UNDER FILM AND VIDEO
R.I.P. H.G. LEWIS
A FINAL INTERVIEW WITH THE GODFATHER OF GORE
PLUS: A LOOK AT HIS DELUXE FEAST BOX SET
YOUNG BLOOD
SPOTLIGHT: A NEW WAVE OF TEEN HORROR FILMMAKERS
KRAMPUS
THE DEFINITIVE ILLUSTRATED BOOK
THE AUTOPSY OF JANE DOE • NEW RE-ANIMATOR MOVIE
INDIAN BLACK METAL • VISCERAL: THE ART OF JASON EDMISTON
6:44 AM

A
MONSTER
APP

THE WORLD'S #1 HORROR MAGAZINE
IS NOW AVAILABLE PRIOR TO NEWSSTANDS
ON iPHONE, iPAD, iPOD TOUCH AND PC/MAC.
NOW WITH BONUS CONTENT, AUDIO AND VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS AND LOTS MORE!

$4.99
PER ISSUE

VISIT RUE-MORGUE.COM OR THE APP STORE

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM, TWITTER AND FACEBOOK

ForteanTimes

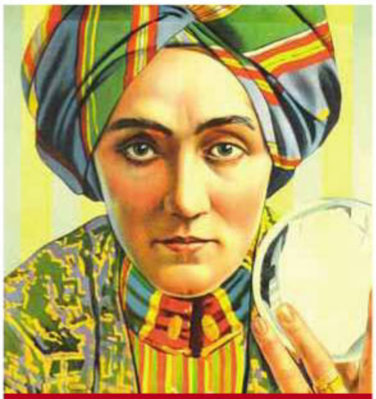
Available on the iPhone
App Store

CONTENTS

the world of strange phenomena

MATTHEW LLOYD / GETTY IMAGES

38 HAPPY OLD CHRISTMAS
Why some people save the celebrations for January



30 SORCERERS SUPREME
Chandu the Magician to Doctor Strange

JOHN BILLINGSLEY

56 O LUCKY DOG
Todmorden's invented tradition

DENIS SINYAKOV / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

48 STRANGE STATESMEN
East is best and West is beast

10 AURORAL AURAL ANOMALIES
Listening to the Northern Lights

COVER IMAGE: COURTESY OF NIELSEN MAGIC COLLECTION

Fortean Times 349

strange days

Trump's fringe science, haunted railway stations, extreme water allergies, Thai ogres, Antarctic pyramids, mysterious hums and pings, the Humber Monster, spectral photobombs, man turns into tricycle – and much more.

05 THE CONSPIRASPHERE
14 ARCHAEOLOGY
15 CLASSICAL CORNER
16 SCIENCE
18 GHOSTWATCH
21 ALIEN ZOO
23 MYTHCONCEPTIONS
26 THE UFO FILES

COVER STORY

30 CONJURING ASIA

Marvel's Doctor Strange is just the latest in a long line of seekers after truth who have headed to the Mystic East in search of spiritual enlightenment and supernatural powers. **CHRIS GOTO-JONES** recalls the Western magicians who transformed themselves into turban-sporting seers, and examines the appeal of Orientalism's magical myth.

38 HAPPY OLD CHRISTMAS

You thought it was all over, but due to the Orthodox refusal to accept the new fangled Gregorian calendar, many people – from Margate to Memphis – will still be celebrating Christmas in January. **TED HARRISON** goes in search of some stubborn old traditions...

42 THE OCCULT LIFE OF MONTAGUE SUMMERS

Was Montague Summers a priest or a dabbler in the dark arts? With one foot in the Catholic Church and another in the world of the supernatural, he has been claimed as both. **BRIAN REGAL** explores the real 'occult life' of one of the great eccentrics of English letters.

forum

55 The Horror in the British Museum by Steve Toase
56 Todmorden's 'lucky' dog by John Billingsley

reports

28 BLASTS FROM THE PAST
No 65. Tales of spontaneous human levitation

48 STRANGE STATESMEN
No 17. Russia Today: East is Best and West is Beast

52 BUILDING A FORTEAN LIBRARY
No 17. A new view over Albion

74 TALES FROM THE ILLUSTRATED POLICE NEWS
No 53. Newfoundland dogs to the rescue!

regulars

02 EDITORIAL
59 REVIEWS
69 LETTERS
78 READER INFO
79 PHENOMENOMIX
80 STRANGE DEATHS

EDITOR
DAVID SUTTON
(drsutton@forteantimes.com)

FOUNDING EDITORS
BOB RICKARD (bobrickard@mail.com)
PAUL SIEVEKING (sieveking@forteantimes.com)

ART DIRECTOR
ETIENNE GILFILLAN
(etienne@forteantimes.com)

BOOK REVIEWS EDITOR
VAL STEVENSON
(val@forteantimes.com)

RESIDENT CARTOONIST
HUNT EMERSON

SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES AND BACK ISSUES
www.subsinfo.co.uk
ForteanTimes@servicehelpline.co.uk

FORTEAN TIMES is produced for Dennis Publishing
by Wild Talents Ltd. Postal address: Fortean Times,
PO BOX 71602, London E17 0QD.

You can manage your existing subscription through
http://www.subsinfo.co.uk/ – this should be your first port
of call if you have any queries about your subscription.

Change your address, renew your subscription
or report problems
UK subscriptions: 0844 844 0049
USA & Canada subscriptions: (+1) 800-428-3003 (toll free)
Fax (+1) 757-428-6253 email cs@imsnews.com
Other overseas subscriptions: +44 (0)1795 592 909
Fax: +44 (0)1795 414 555

LICENSING & SYNDICATION
FORTEAN TIMES IS AVAILABLE FOR
INTERNATIONAL LICENSING AND SYNDICATION – CONTACT:
Syndication Senior Manager
ANJ DOSAJ-HALAI TEL: +44- (0) 20 7907 6132
Anj_Dosaj-Halai@dennis.co.uk
Licensing Manager
CARLOTTA SERANTONI TEL: +44- (0) 20 7907 6550
Carlotta_Serantoni@dennis.co.uk
Licensing & Syndication Assistant
NICOLE ADAMS TEL: +44- (0) 20 7907 6134
Nicole_Adams@dennis.co.uk

YOU CAN REACH FT ON THE INTERNET
www.forteantimes.com

© Copyright Dennis Publishing Limited

PUBLISHED BY
DENNIS PUBLISHING,
30 Cleveland Street
London W1T 4JD, UK
Tel: 020 7907 6000

CIRCULATION MANAGER
JAMES MANGAN
james.mangan@
seymour.co.uk

EXPORT CIRCULATION MANAGER
GERALDINE GROBLER
geraldine.grobler@
seymour.co.uk

PRODUCTION EXECUTIVE
LAWRENCE BROOKES
020 7907 6062
lawrence_brookes@
dennis.co.uk

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
STEVE NICOLAOU
020 7907 6633
steve_nicolaou@
dennis.co.uk

SALES EXECUTIVE
BRADLEY BEAVER
020 7907 6701
bradley_beaver@
dennis.co.uk

SALES EXECUTIVE
IMOGEN WILLIAMS
020 7907 6247
imogen_williams@
dennis.co.uk

PRINTED BY WILLIAM GIBBONS & SONS LTD

DISTRIBUTION
Distributed in UK, Ireland and worldwide
by Seymour Distribution Ltd.
2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT
Tel: 020 7429 4000 / Fax: 020 7429 4001
Queries on overseas availability should be emailed to
info@seymour.co.uk
Speciality store distribution by Worldwide Magazine
Distribution Ltd, Tel: 0121 788 3112 Fax: 0121 788 1272

STANDARD SUBSCRIPTION RATES
12 issues: UK £39.98; EU £47.50

Fortean Times (USPS 023-226) is published every four weeks by Dennis Publishing Ltd, 30 Cleveland Street, London, W1P 4JD, United Kingdom.
The US annual subscription price is $89.99.
Airfreight and mailing in the USA is by Agent named Air Business,
C/O Worldnet Shipping USA Inc., 149-35 177th Street, Jamaica,
New York, 11434.
Periodical postage paid at Jamaica, NY 11431, USA.
US Postmaster: Send address changes to: Fortean Times,
3330 Pacific Avenue, Suite 500, Virginia Beach, VA, 23451-2983, USA.

REST OF THE WORLD £55; US $89.99 ($161.98 for 24 issues)

DENNIS PUBLISHING LIMITED
GROUP CFO/COO BRETT REYNOLDS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERIN O'CONNOR
CHIEF EXECUTIVE JAMES TYE
COMPANY FOUNDER FELIX DENNIS

Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations.
Circulation 14,320 (Jan-Dec 2015)

Printed in the UK. ISSN: 0308 5899

© Fortean Times: DECEMBER 2016

editorial

New Year, Old Christmas...

HAPPY CHRISTMAS, AGAIN!

For most of us, it's time to take down the decorations and resume normal life (if such a thing should prove possible in 2017), so spare a thought for those who are only just celebrating the big day. We'd like to wish all dedicated followers of the Julian Calendar a very happy Christmas! Ted Harrison rounds up some of the Old Christmas customs that have hung on stubbornly into the 21st century in his feature (p38); and your editor contributes the photograph on this page showing His Eminence Gregorios, Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, leading Margate's Orthodox Church members (and assorted local dignatories) in the somewhat surreal Blessing of the Seas, which takes place on Old Christmas Day in early January.

ABOVE: His Eminence Gregorios, holding the traditional sprig of rosemary, prepares to bless the seas at Margate, Kent.

Elsewhere (p30), Chris Goto-Jones examines the ancestors of Doctor Strange who, like Marvel's Sorcerer Supreme, journeyed to the East in search of spiritual enlightenment and supernatural powers... or, keen to fall in with the Orientalist myth of Eastern magic, at least pretended they did. Brian Regal, meanwhile, looks at the writing career of another figure often accused of being a dabbler in the Black Arts, Montague Summers (p42). All this plus Folk Horror, auroral anomalies, haunted railway stations and an unexpected breakthrough in the 40-year-old case of the Wollaton Park Gnomes.

FT INDEXING PROJECT UPDATE

FT's co-founding editor Bob Rickard has been overseeing a vital project to ensure that future researchers will be able to make full use of the wealth of material contained in what will soon be more than 350 issues of *Fortean Times*. Providing an update on current progress, and telling you how you can get involved, he writes:

Thanks to a small but heroic team of volunteers, I can report that we have more than 90 per cent of FT's 43-year run scanned as the first stage of generating a full index. The remainder involves a number of files which need to be checked for quality or which have become damaged along the way; but this will be remedied within a few months. I am about to launch phase two – conversion of the files into indexable wordlists – and for this I once again turn to our wonderful community for crowd-sourcing this huge but simple, if time-consuming, editing job. The task at hand involves comparing a PDF image of a page of FT with a text list of words extracted from it; then correcting any OCR errors, and reforming any names, phrases or dates that have been split up by the automated indexing routine.

That's it! No special equipment is needed as a standard PDF-reader will do. Each batch of work will contain the files for a single issue: so they may range from under 20 (in the really old days) to today's 70 or so pages. It will take me a couple of months to get batches ready, so I'm simply collecting names right now. This will be conducted by email, so (unlike the scanning phase) overseas volunteers will also be welcome. If anyone would like a sample file to better judge what is involved, do let me know via bobrickard@mail.com

This is an appropriate place to express my personal thanks – and on behalf of all the people who will use this index in the future – to the following (in alphabetical order, which includes those who volunteered from overseas but could not be considered because of the high cost of postage): Sheila Crompton, Matthew Crossman, Ben Goodrum, Luis R Gonzalez, Stephen Graham, Petard Haughie, Chris Harris, Alan Hillyer, Lisa Mead, Pete Rogers, Steve Pearce, Paul Sinclair, Chris Thompson, Paul Wallace, Anthony Wilkins and Dan Worthington. (Apologies to anyone omitted.)

ERRATA

FT346:53: Rachel Hazard of McKinleyville, California, wrote in to point out that a caption in Jerome Clark's "There will be monsters" states that Crater Lake is in Northern California, when it is in Oregon. She adds: "I lived in Klamath Falls for a year – the lake is a lovely drive, with snow lasting until July".

FT348:69: The cartoon in our Christmas edition was credited to Paul Lee when the artist was in fact longtime FT contributor Paul Taylor.

DAVID R SUTTON

BOB RICKARD

Paul Sieveking
PAUL SIEVEKING

Why fortean?
Everything you always wanted to know about *Fortean Times* but were too paranoid to ask!
SEE PAGE 78

15TH ANNIVERSARY RELEASE – EXCLUSIVE 4K RESTORATION

JAKE GYLLENHAAL JENA MALONE DREW BARRYMORE MARY McDONNELL KATHARINE ROSS PATRICK SWAYZE NOAH WYLE

A FILM BY RICHARD KELLY

"A MINI-MASTERPIECE"
EMPIRE

"HAUNTING AND ALTOGETHER EXQUISITE"
SIGHT & SOUND

"UNSETTLING AND AUDACIOUS"
CULTUREVULTURE.NET

"EXCITINGLY ORIGINAL INDIE VISION"
ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

"ASTONISHINGLY IMAGINATIVE, POIGNANT"
FILMFOUR.COM

"LIKE A TEEN MOVIE FILTERED THROUGH THE WORK OF DAVID LYNCH"
VIEW LONDON

"A TERRIFIC COMBINATION OF BOTH LIGHT AND DARK TOUCHES"
SHADOWS ON THE WALL

DONNIE DARKO

15

AVAILABLE JAN 9

Get it on iTunes

PANDORA PRESENTS A FLOWER FILMS PRODUCTION A RICHARD KELLY FILM "DONNIE DARKO" JAKE GYLLENHAAL JENA MALONE DREW BARRYMORE MARY McDONNELL KATHARINE ROSS PATRICK SWAYZE NOAH WYLE MUSIC SUPERVISORS MANISH RAVAL TOM WOLFE MUSIC BY MICHAEL ANDREWS COSTUME DESIGNER APRIL FERRY EDITED BY SAM BAUER ERIC STRAND PRODUCTION DESIGNER ALEXANDER HAMMOND DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY STEVEN POSTER ASC EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DREW BARRYMORE HUNT LOWRY CASEY LA SCALA WILLIAM TYRER CHRIS J. BALL AARON RYDER PRODUCED BY SEAN McKITTRICK NANCY JUVONEN ADAM FIELDS WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY RICHARD KELLY

pandora LAKESHORE ENTERTAINMENT

© 2001 PANDORICA INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

ARROW FILMS

/ArrowVideo @ArrowFilmsVideo WWW.ARROWFILMS.CO.UK /ArrowVideoUK ArrowVideo

A DIGEST OF THE WORLDWIDE WEIRD

strangedays

Ogres and a tricycle-man

Some truly strange news items to get the New Year off to a flying start

ABOVE: Bunsong Prathumchai and his disciples trapped 300 ogres in an earthenwar jar, which was then incinerated.

THAI OGRES EXPELLED

Following five unexplained deaths, some 300 ogres were rounded up and destroyed in a mass exorcism in Thailand on 11 December 2016. Two men aged 55 had died for no apparent reason in their hammocks and a 67-year-old man pegged out from threshing rice. The other two deaths are not referred to in the news report. Worried villagers had held a crisis meeting and agreed to spend 50 baht (£1.11) per household to bring in experts and buy the necessary ghost busting equipment. The deaths were blamed on what the locals call *phee pop*, a particularly virulent and unpleasant kind of ogre that has been known to enter people's bodies and eat them from the inside out.

Professional ghost buster Bunsong Prathumchai, 56, and 14 of his disciples from Mahasarakhram got the ball rolling with a ceremony at the Kalasin town hall that included flowers, incense, a sacred sword and various woods including tamarind. Then the action moved to the five affected villages in the Nong Yai sub-district where villagers took part in the *siang khong* part of the exorcism where the *phee pop* were hunted down and chased into an earthenware jar covered in a sacred cloth. Once 300 errant ogres were trapped in the jar, it was incinerated to get rid of the trouble they had caused once and for all. Following the successful exorcisms everyone was satisfied and could get on with the rest of their lives in peace. *thaivisa.com, 12 Dec 2016.*

Ogres were in the Thai news last September, when a video aimed at encouraging domestic tourism sparked controversy. The "Fun to Travel in Thailand" video showed actors dressed as ogres enjoying various activities, but upset Ladda Tangsupachai, a former Fine Arts Department official, who complained to the Bunditpatanasilpa Institute. A meeting of experts agreed that it was not appropriate to show characters from the *Ramayana* "cooking coconut cream cakes, biking, driving go-carts and taking selfies". *Bangkok Post, 21 Sept 2016.*

The ogres were hunted down and chased into a jar

MAN TURNS INTO TRICYCLE

A most unusual transformation allegedly took place recently in a suburb of Lagos in Nigeria. A witness described the event on social media. "Please parents, teachers and guardians, continuously educate your wards on the need to be careful and not talk to strangers on the road," the post read. "An incident occurred at Pedro, Shomolu, on Tuesday 22 November 2016, precisely at famous bus stop. A man stopped a child returning from school and asked him to pick up a key from the ground [that the man had himself dropped]. The child refused, asking why the man couldn't pick it up himself and this got the man agitated and he started shouting at the child saying he lacked respect for his elders and all sorts but the child still refused. This attracted the attention of passers-by and luckily, a police van was passing by and they stopped to find out what the problem was.

"After listening to the man, they asked the child who owned the key and the boy replied that it was for the man so the police got suspicious and asked the man to pick up the key. He refused and was forced to. Immediately he picked up the key, he turned into a brand new tricycle (*keke maruwa*)! [Elsewhere in the report this tricycle is called a *keke napep*.] Everybody ran away and even the policemen were scared. The tricycle was eventually pushed to the Pedro police station. This is a real life incidence [sic] and anyone in doubt can go to the Pedro police station to ascertain the authenticity of this post." (Fans of *The Third Policeman*, Flann O'Brien's comic masterpiece, might be put in mind of riders gradually turning into their bicycles.)

The narrative then veers into incomprehensibility:

"When the man's wife was called to the station, she said her husband comes home every day with a brand new tricycle and gives it to people on higher [sic] purchase and she didn't know where he got them from. These ritualists are more desperate to make money and they devise new means every day, but I pray that God will continue to protect our children and increase them in wisdom." *naij.com, 1 Dec 2016.*

SPECTRAL PHOTOBOMBS
Supposed spooks snapped in castles and cinemas
PAGE 8

BEYOND THE FRINGE
Chemtrails, ship tracks and other science from the far left field
PAGE 16

WAITING FOR MAITREYA
We bid farewell to Benjamin Creme, emissary of the New Christ
PAGE 24

The Conspirasphere

We all love a conspiracy theory these days. **NOEL ROONEY** goes in search of the Antarctic pyramids, with the help of unidentified 'scientists', nameless 'experts' and tabloid journalists...

In recent months, I've spoken to an increasing number of people who, while making it clear they do not subscribe to any (or maybe just a few) conspiracy theories, nonetheless spend a proportion of their time looking at conspiracy sites and YouTube videos of a conspiratorial nature. This is seen by these people as a form of entertainment, of course; the Conspirasphere as a spectator sport, or conspiracy as the extra channel on their mental tellies. Curiously, when I ask them how they came to start looking at this stuff, they either can't remember (there's a conspiracy theory right there waiting to happen) or say it's because they saw something in their daily newspaper, or on their regular news website.

So entrance to the Conspirasphere, once a matter of furtive searching in odd bookshops and entering left-field terms on search engines, is now occasioned via the mainstream media. Some media outlets (in the UK, the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mail* spring readily to mind) seem to spend a fair amount of time and energy bringing their readers up to date with the news of the weird. But even the 'quality press' is not above running the odd conspiracy-related piece.

The 'recent' 'discovery' of pyramid-like structures in the Antarctic was excitedly reported in both the *Express* and the *Mail*. As background, both included inaccurate and superficial material about the Great Pyramid at Giza, clearly the result of a desultory Google search. I was astonished at the complete lack of scepticism expressed by the newspapers concerned, and the apparently total absence of fact checking.

Just a little investigation might have led them to notice that: first, the story is not new; and second, the provenance of the story is far from solid. In fact the Antarctic pyramid meme started a few years ago (I found traces of it going back to 2008, but there may well be earlier appearances) and was not much of a story then. It's the result of a couple of hours of photo-shopping combined with a little stretch of the geological imagination that could easily have been cooked up by the same people who brought you Pizzagate, the shocking saga of satanic goings-on in the Clinton camp; that is, a bunch of Macedonian teenagers with too much time on their hands.

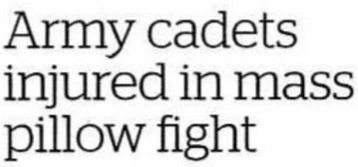
But on reflection, I can see why some tabloids were prepared to take the story at face value. Many of its elements were couched in the same vague terms as the press releases that find their way into the news mill; the term 'scientists' (without identification or attribution) to suggest the story had some kind of authority, for instance. 'Experts' (again, unidentified) is similarly employed. So as far as a few tabloid hacks were concerned, this was as valid as any of the other stuff they regurgitate on a daily basis. And anyway, if one's stock in trade is immigrant bashing spiced with the odd 'vicar marries goat' level of factoid, a spoof pyramid in the ice might as well be about to "change the course of human history".

In the post-truth, post-factual world we are now told we inhabit, the entertainment level of all this material is roughly equal, so perhaps it's no wonder that otherwise sensible people are prepared to make it part of their daily news diet. But how long before sceptical giggle turns into gullible acceptance?

http://www.express.co.uk/news/weird/734186/snow-pyramid-Antarctic-human-history-discovery
https://owlcation.com/humanities/Debunking-the-Pyramids-of-Antarctica-myth

EXTRA! EXTRA!

FT'S FAVOURITE HEADLINES FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Army cadets injured in mass pillow fight

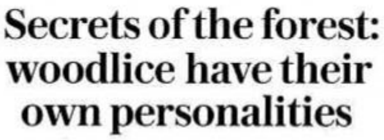
<i> 7 Sept 2015.

Ghosts face cup replay

Lynn News (Norfolk), 18 Aug 2015.

Superman sought over watch theft

(Wolverhampton) Express & Star, 26 Aug 2015.



Secrets of the forest: woodlice have their own personalities

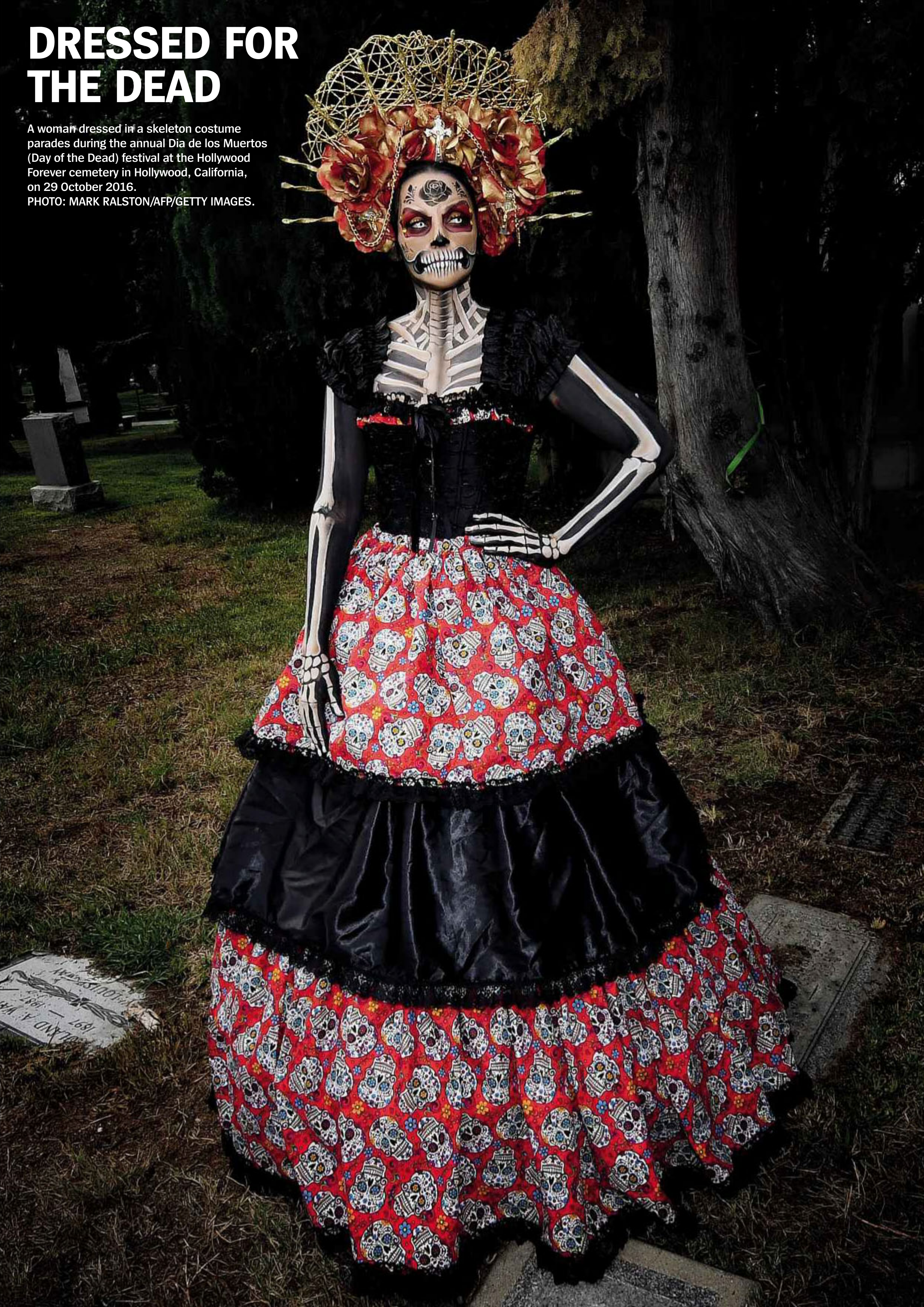
D.Telegraph, 3 Aug 2015.

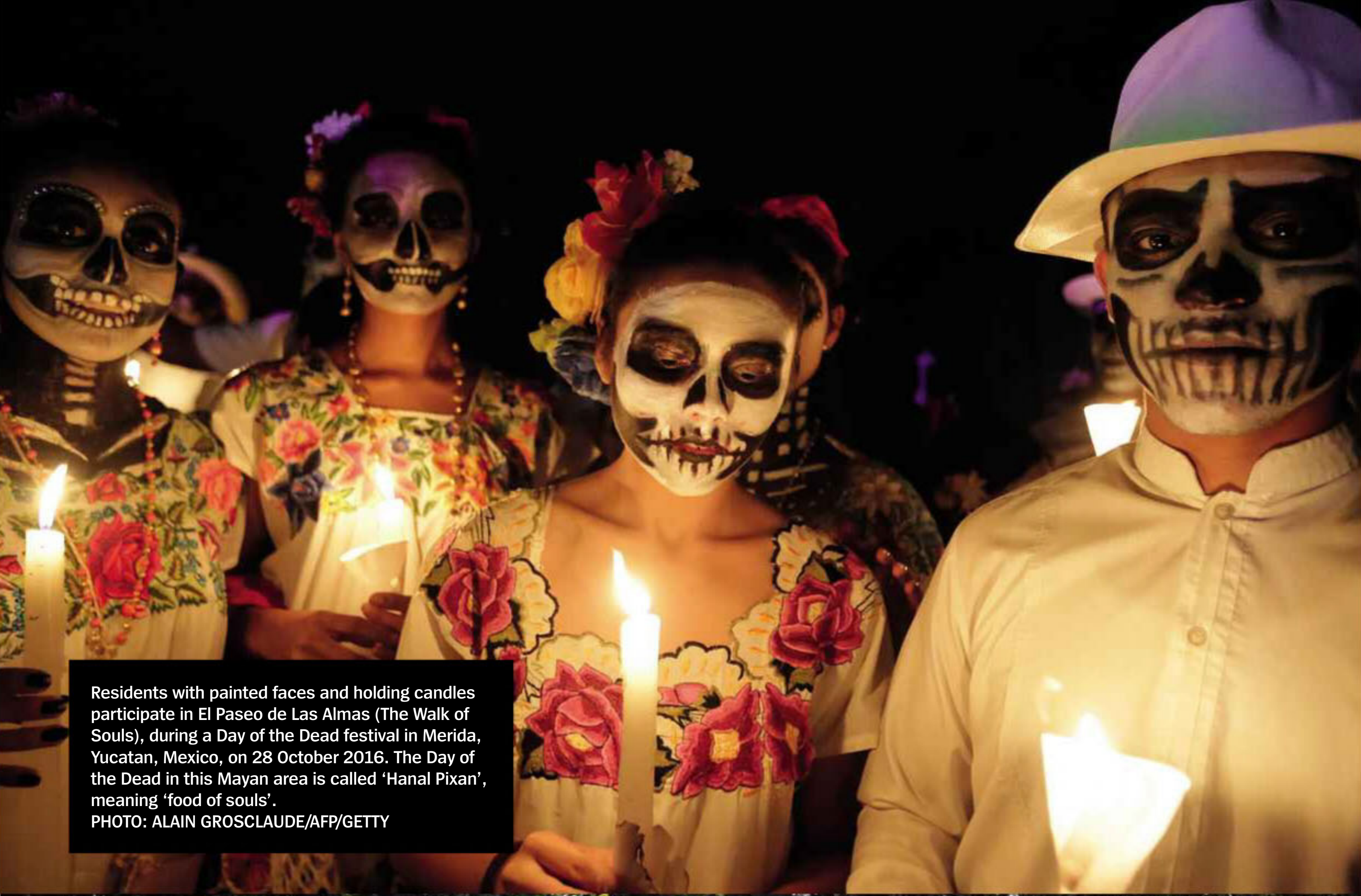
ROOT RAT MIGHT BE BUGGERED

(Queensland) Courier-Mail, 4 Sept 2015.

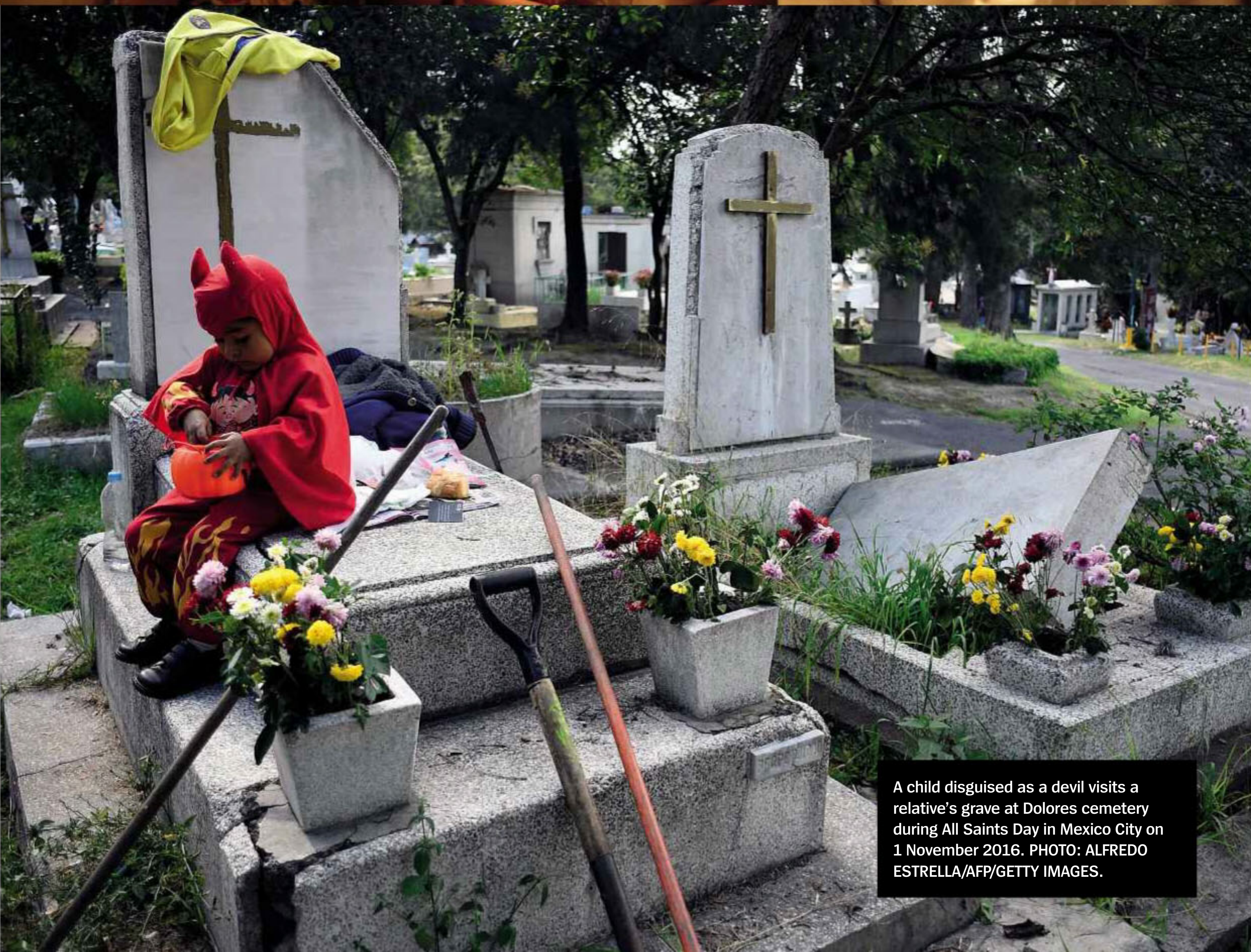
DRESSED FOR THE DEAD

A woman dressed in a skeleton costume parades during the annual Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) festival at the Hollywood Forever cemetery in Hollywood, California, on 29 October 2016.
PHOTO: MARK RALSTON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES.





Residents with painted faces and holding candles participate in El Paseo de Las Almas (The Walk of Souls), during a Day of the Dead festival in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico, on 28 October 2016. The Day of the Dead in this Mayan area is called 'Hanal Pixan', meaning 'food of souls'.
PHOTO: ALAIN GROSCLAUDE/AFP/GETTY



A child disguised as a devil visits a relative's grave at Dolores cemetery during All Saints Day in Mexico City on 1 November 2016. PHOTO: ALFREDO ESTRELLA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES.

SIDELINES...

STONE ME!

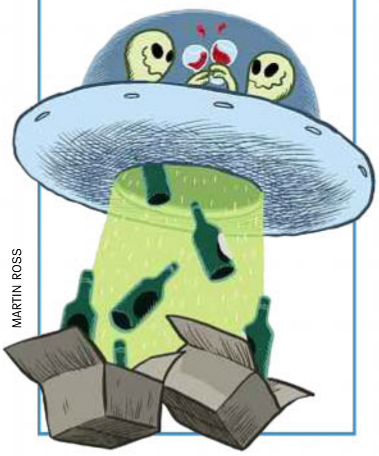
Scores of homes were evacuated on 26 October when a suspected World War II bomb was found in a garden in Hinchley Wood, Surrey. Following four hours of traffic chaos, bomb disposal experts announced that the suspect device was a rock. *Metro, 27 Oct 2016*.

PROFESSIONAL HERMIT

The northern Swiss town of Solothurn has appointed retired policeman Michal Daum, 55, to be a hermit, a position created in 1442 in honour of St Verena, who was believed to have lived as a recluse in the region. Daum, described as "a charismatic personality", studied theology and meditation after leaving the police force. He will be paid £19,000 a year (with a paid holiday), live in a secluded cave-like cabin, take care of a nearby chapel and gorge, dispense wisdom and talk to tourists. *USA Today, 29 Sept 2016.*

NO UFOS ALLOWED

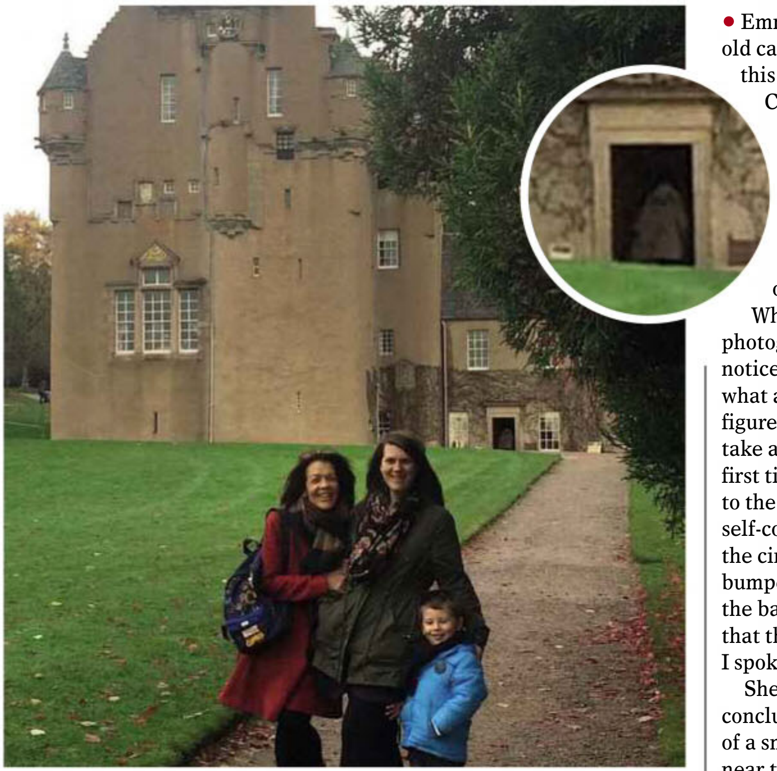
Claude Avril, mayor of Châteauneuf-du-Pape in the south of France, 7.5 miles (12km) north of Avignon, refuses to lift a ban on UFOs imposed 60 years ago, on the basis that it 'makes a buzz' for the town (famous for fine wines). The law – which forbids extraterrestrial vehicles from flying overhead and threatens arrest of any craft landing in the vicinity – was passed in 1954 after a local man reported witnessing two 'deep sea divers' emerging from a 'cigar-shaped spacecraft'. *rt.com, 28 Oct 2016.*



MARTIN ROSS

Spectral photobombs

Plus Communist ghost ban and Meatloaf sees dead people



BILL ANDREW

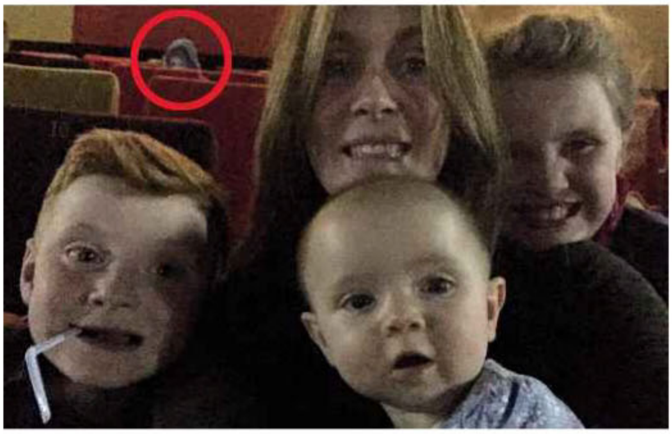
- Bill Andrew took this photograph at Scotland's Crathes Castle near Banchory last November. It shows his daughter Coleen, granddaughter Jessica and great-grandson Findley, who live in Kent. It was only later that Coleen spotted the shadowy shape standing in the doorway behind them. The castle's Property Manager James Henderson commented: "There have been a number of mysterious sightings in and around the castle of late, in particular around Hallowe'en, and the castle guides have reported that things have felt strange. They have reported a chill down the back in an otherwise warm room, odd noises in an otherwise empty building. Could this photograph be related to this? Or, perhaps it is a sighting of the Green Lady."

A press release by the National Trust (28 Nov 2016) elaborates: "Crathes Castle's Green Lady is usually spotted in the same room, carrying an infant child. It is said that the skeletons of a woman and child were discovered under the fireplace during renovations and that Queen Victoria herself witnessed the apparition. Another ghost thought to be Lady Agnes has also been seen. She died suddenly after she apparently poisoned her son's sweetheart and is said to reappear on the anniversary of her death."

- Emma Johnson, a 35-year-old carer from Liverpool, took this photograph in the Light Cinema in New Brighton, Wirral, at 12.30pm on 2 August, after a showing of *Finding Dory*. She is accompanied by her children George (six), Ava (eight) and seven-month-old Harper.

When she looked at the photograph back home, she noticed in the seats behind them what appeared to be a hooded figure. She said: "I wanted to take a selfie because it was the first time that Harper had been to the cinema but I was really self-conscious so I made sure that the cinema was empty. I even bumped into a friend who was on the back row and she assured me that there was no one there when I spoke to her later."

She somehow came to the conclusion that it was the ghost of a small girl who had drowned near the seaside cinema in 2011. The news reports claim the figure is "clutching a teddy bear", though we fail to see this supposed spectral playmate. To prevent her children from being scared, Ms Johnson told them that the spook was a marketing ploy to promote the new *Ghostbusters* film. *D.Mirror online, D.Mail online, 8 Aug 2016.*



MERCURY PRESS

TOP: A boilerplate heritage explanation suggests that the figure in the doorway is the Green Lady. **ABOVE:** A hooded figure lurking in New Brighton's Light Cinema.

Meat Loaf encountered a ghost in a London hotel

ORDERED TO DISBELIEVE

FENG LI / GETTY IMAGES

Wang Qishan, one of Beijing's top officials, has warned members of the ruling Communist Party to stop believing in the supernatural. The Party has been seeking to wipe out belief in weird stuff since before it seized power in 1949, and campaigns have increased in recent years. "Currently, some Communist Party members don't believe in Marxism-Leninism but they believe in ghosts and supernatural beings," said Mr Wang, who heads the Party's graft watchdog, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI). "They don't believe in the organisation, but choose to believe in 'Masters'," added the official, referring to those who teach supernatural or superstitious customs, who often carry great influence among Chinese leaders. Mr Wang apparently made the comments in late October in a speech at the opening ceremony of a meeting of an advisory body, but they were only reported in an influential party journal at the end of November. Many of the thousands of officials who have been imprisoned in a wide-ranging anti-corruption drive led by Xi Jinping, the Chinese president, have also been charged with holding superstitious beliefs. *D.Telegraph online, 2 Dec 2016.*

● The Chinese Communist Party has some odd ideas about its spiritual powers, considering its atheist dogma. Last year the 14th Dalai Lama, 79, suggested he would not be reincarnated when he dies, prompting the Party to decree that he must reincarnate, and on their terms. In March 2015, Zhu Weiqun, a Party official who has long dealt with Tibetan issues, told reporters in Beijing that the Dalai Lama was being "extremely frivolous and disrespectful" and had essentially no say over whether he was reincarnated; that was ultimately for the Chinese government to decide, he said. The Party would prefer to insert itself into a succession process that carries the full weight of Tibetan tradition rather than install a new Dalai Lama by fiat, undermining the new religious leader's credibility in Tibet. *Metro, 10 Mar; Int. NY Times, 12 Mar 2015.*

MEAT LOAF SEES THE DEAD

In an interview last November, the rock star Meat Loaf, 69, talked about the ghosts of dead people he claims to see. "I think if we walked together down a busy street in London, somebody that looked like a normal person would no doubt pass us, but you might feel a temperature change and a heavy feeling," he said. "It would be a like a weight was on your chest and you'd got tired all of a sudden. If we turned around at that moment and followed the person who just passed us, he would disappear."

Meat – the name he prefers to his given name Marvin Lee Aday – recalls encountering a ghost in a London hotel. It came through a wall at 6am and stood at the edge of the bed. "I turned and shouted, 'Hey hey hey!'. He never turned and never looked at me. It wasn't merely his spirit; it was an energy that was left. He wasn't ready to die. He was probably just repeating the same thing over and over again. If it was an intelligent haunting, he would have turned and stopped."

Meat is clearly ready for ghosts – he says he communicates with the dead using a K2 meter, which detects changes in electromagnetic fields (EMF). His encounters go back at least to when he recorded "Bat Out of Hell" in 1977 at Cleveland International Records, where he says this happened: "When we were making 'Bat Out of Hell' I saw a blonde girl in a white dress. I went downstairs and told the guys, 'There's a groupie up on the balcony,' and they go, 'How would she get up there?' Everybody went up and no one was there." *mysteriousuniverse.org, 2 Dec 2016.*

TED ALJIBE / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

TOP: Wang Qishan is unhappy about belief in ghosts rather than Marxism within the Chinese Communist Party. **ABOVE**: Singer Meat Loaf has been seeing ghosts for years.

SIDELINES...

NO LONGER VENGEFUL

On 30 October central Italy was struck by a 6.6-magnitude quake — the most powerful to hit the country in 36 years – leaving hundreds dead and tens of thousands homeless. Father Giovanni Cavalcoli said on Radio Maria that the quake was "divine punishment" for gay civil unions (which had been legalised a month earlier). The Vatican quickly issued a stinging rebuke, saying the idea of a vengeful God was "a pagan vision" dating from "the pre-Christian era". *Sun, 5 Nov; Sunday Telegraph, 6 Nov 2016.*

SNAILMATE

Last October, scientists at the University of Nottingham appealed to the public for help in finding Jeremy, a 'one in a million' left–spiralling garden snail from London, another 'lefty' to mate with. As a result, the mollusc was matched to another in Ipswich, Suffolk, and one that had escaped the pot at a snail farm in Mallorca. "There were good signs last night of some potential flirting," said Jade Melton, who keeps up to 300 snails as pets at her home in Ipswich, including sinistral mutant 'Lefty'. *BBC News, 8 Nov; D.Telegraph, 9 Nov 2016.*

BOGUS HEALTH INSPECTOR

A woman posing as an Environmental Health Officer entered a restaurant in the Trafford area, carried out an "inspection", declared the premises unhygienic, and told the owners she was going to "close it down". Trafford Council and Greater Manchester Police say the woman was an imposter. *manchestereveningnews.co.uk, 23 Aug 2016.*

MELON MENACE

A yellow melon covered in Arabic script and neat rows of hammered nails was declared safe after it washed up on a beach. The fruit also bore a stylised human figure, and was investigated by police in Sharjah, a conservative emirate where items associated with black magic are illegal. *[AP] 31 Oct 2016.*

SIDELINES...

CELEBRATION TO FORGET

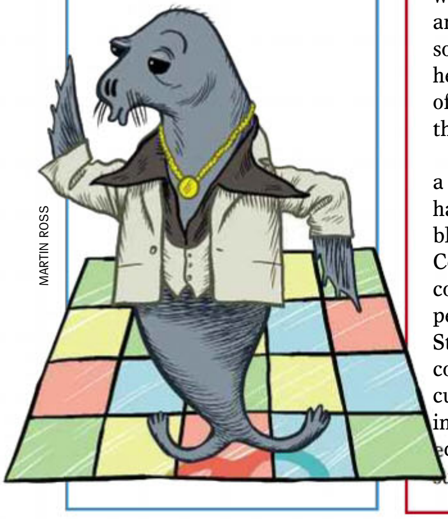
After spending several days in hospital with food poisoning, the Erdal family sacrificed a sheep to thank God for their recovery – only to infect themselves again as well as 20 guests. Within hours, all five and their friends had tummy bugs. Mother Asiye Erdal, who cooked both doomed meals in Teridag, northern Turkey, said she would be more careful in future. *Sun, 26 Aug 2016.*

BATTLING BEAVER

Betsy Bent, 67, was paddle-boarding on Beaver Lake, North Carolina, on 8 July when a beaver knocked her board over from underneath the water, then latched on to her leg and wouldn't let go. A fisherman knocked the beaver off her twice, but it attacked again before letting her go. Bent needed stitches and rabies shots. *[AP] 11 July 2016.*

MUSICAL SEA LION

A sea lion called Ronan who dances to the songs of Earth, Wind And Fire and the Backstreet Boys has the best sense of rhythm in the animal kingdom, according to scientists writing in the journal *Frontiers in Neuroscience*. The beat-keeping ability of the seven-year-old mammal, held in captivity in California since she was one, is much better than that of parrots, budgies, chimps – and many humans. *D.Mail, 4 Aug 2016.*


MARTIN ROSS

DID YOU HEAR THAT?

MYSTERIOUS PINGS AND HUMS, PLUS AURORAL AURAL ANOMALIES

BASHILDY / CREATIVE COMMONS

ABOVE: The hamlet of Igloolik in the region where the strange pings are heard.

NUNAVUT PINGS

In one of Canada's northernmost territories, hunters are concerned about a mysterious pinging sound that appears to derive from the sea floor and could be heard throughout the summer. The sound, which has also been described as a 'hum' or a 'beep' and can even be heard through the hulls of boats, has apparently spooked the local wildlife in Fury and Hecla Strait, a channel of water in the Nunavut region around 75 miles (120km) northwest of the hamlet of Igloolik. When George Qulaut, a member of the Nunavut legislative assembly, visited the site he didn't hear the pinging sound but did notice the decline in wildlife. "That passage is a migratory route for bowhead whales, and also bearded seals and ringed seals. There would be so many in that particular area," he said, recalling his own days of hunting there. "This summer, there were none."

The origin of the sound remains a mystery, though several theories have been put forward. Some blame Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation, a nearby mining company. In the past, the firm has performed sonar surveys of the Steensby Inlet in the area, but the company maintains that it is not currently conducting any surveys in Nunavut, and doesn't have any equipment in the water. Others suggested that Greenpeace was making the noise deliberately to scare wildlife away from the hunting area. "We've heard in the past of groups like Greenpeace putting in some kinds of sonars in the seabed to get the sea mammals out of the way so Inuit won't be able to hunt them," said Paul Quassa, another member of the legislative assembly. But Farrah Khan, a spokeswoman for Greenpeace, responded: "Not only would we not do anything to harm marine life, but we very much respect the right of Inuit to hunt and would definitely not want to impact that in any way."

At the time of the reports, the Canadian military was investigating the "acoustic anomalies". No submarines, either domestic or foreign, are known to have operated in the area; Department of National Defence internal correspondence suggested submarines were not considered a likely source of the noise, but they had not the been ruled out. *BBC News, D.Mail online, D.Telegraph online, 4 Nov; livescience.com, 7 Nov 2016.*

A mysterious pinging that derives from the sea floor

WINDSOR HUM

Nunavut pings are not the first mysterious noise that the Canadian government has been called in to investigate. For the last six years, a low 35hz rumbling known as the 'Windsor Hum' has plagued residents of Windsor, a city in Ontario of 210,000 people just across the river from Detroit [**FT291:14, 341:22**]. The sound, loud enough to rattle windows, has been compared to a subwoofer blasting Barry White's greatest hits, an idling diesel truck, or Star Trek's *Enterprise* gearing up for warp speed. This year, it has intensified to unprecedented, unbearable, levels. Part noise, part vibration, the hum varies in intensity and comes and goes at random, sometimes lasting hours, at other times droning on for days. Speculation on its origin has included links to UFOs and covert tunnelling by the Canadian military. A Canadian government investigation in 2013 pointed the finger at blast furnace operations run by US Steel on Zug Island, a few miles down the river from the bridge that links Windsor to Detroit, but lead researcher Colin Novak described the study as "like chasing a ghost". US Steel has refused to publically address the issue. In the absence of an international treaty on noise, the US municipality of River Rouge has little incentive to tackle a problem seeming to affect mostly Canadians. In any case, there is no agreement on the origin of the noise. *Guardian, 8 June 2016.*

NORTHERN LIGHT MUSIC

The faint, almost phantasmagorical, sounds heard during intense displays of the aurora borealis are one of the most ephemeral mysteries of the heavens. Acoustician Unto K Laine has spent countless winter nights for more than 15 years among the snowy fields and frozen lakes around his village in southern Finland, studying the phenomenon, and has made the first audio recordings of the muffled crackling or popping sometimes heard overhead during spectacular aurora displays. Over the years, the sounds of the northern lights have been explained as illusions, imagination, inebriation or even voices from the spiritual world – but Laine has shown the sounds are real, and he thinks he has found what causes them: sparks of electricity discharging beneath the aurora in an inversion layer of the atmosphere that can form in clear and calm weather conditions.

In 2000, Laine started to keep a careful watch on space weather forecasts for reports of intense solar flares that could supercharge auroras over the following nights. Auroras are caused by charged particles from solar flares interacting with the Earth's magnetic field and raining into the upper atmosphere, where they excite the nitrogen and oxygen atoms of the air to create the dramatic and colourful light shows. "During all these years, I have checked the space weather two or three times a day, so not to miss any aurora events – and always, when the weather conditions are good, I go," he said.

Laine's solitary hunt demanded great patience. There have been few intense auroras over Finland in the past 16 years, thanks in part to the solar minimum, a period of decreased activity in the Sun's natural 11-year cycle. Between 2004 and 2007, the Sun experienced a lull in activity, which meant fewer solar flares and fewer auroras. In 2011, as solar activity ramped up, Laine started using a VLF loop antenna to measure magnetic fields and a microphone array to triangulate the locations of crackles and pops in the ever-changing sounds from the aurora. "The sounds are diverse and can vary quite a lot, and it is very possible that there are many different mechanisms creating the sounds," he said. "I have been concentrating more on the clapping, popping and crackling, because they are good for estimating the direction of the sound." In September 2011, during an intense aurora, Laine's microphone array was able to triangulate the locations of several distinct 'clap' sounds from the celestial display. To his surprise, the results showed the sounds were originating just 230ft (70m) above the ground – much lower than the auroras themselves, which occur at altitudes of up to 300 km (186 miles).

JANNE KOMMONEN

TIMO_W2S / CREATIVE COMMONS

TOP: Unto K Laine sets up his equipment. **ABOVE**: The aurora borealis over Finland.

Laine's unexpected discovery partly explained one of the mysteries of the acoustics of auroras: How can faint sounds from auroras so high in the atmosphere be heard at the surface of the Earth? In a research paper published in 2012, which included the first recordings of auroral sounds ever made, Laine also ruled out a suggestion that the sounds could be made by trees, because his microphones had been set in open fields and beside frozen lakes.

During an intense display of the northern lights over southern Finland on 17+18 March 2013, when the temperature in the village of Fiskars was minus 4°F (minus 20°C), Laine recorded hundreds of auroral sound events. He also measured magnetic pulses that occurred immediately before each sound event, which corresponded in strength to the volume of the sounds. He then matched his measurements to data from the Finnish Meteorological Institute for the same night, and found they had measured a thermal inversion layer in the atmosphere – a blanket of relatively warm air that traps cold air next to the ground in calm conditions – at the same altitude where the noises originated.

In research presented last June at the Baltic-Nordic Acoustic Meeting in Stockholm, Laine proposed that the sounds are caused by the build-up of electrical charges in the inversion layer, while opposite charges build up in the trapped cold air. When an aurora occurs over the charged inversion layer, geomagnetic disturbances cause the accumulated electricity to discharge with sparks that create measurable magnetic pulses and sounds. This could explain why sounds caused by auroras in the upper atmosphere can be heard at the Earth's surface, and why the volume of the sounds appeared to vary with the intensity of the auroras. With the solar activity cycle now entering its downward swing, Laine may have fewer opportunities over the next few years to continue his hunt for the song of the northern lights. *livescience.com, 12 Oct 2016.*

SIDELINES...

MOLLY MAYHEM

Jonathan Ponce, 31, was arrested for running down a street in Deltona, Florida, armed with a machete, chasing his girlfriend Meghan Silva, 26. Ponce insisted he was chasing ghosts. Police were convinced he was under the influence of a drug called Molly. This is said to be MDMA, but it is often cut with chemicals that can be toxic. *D.Mirror online, 2 Aug 2016.*

PADDLING POOL SLASHER

For seven years the "paddling pool slasher" carried out a campaign of destruction that terrorised a corner of Bavaria. After wrecking 47 inflatables during nocturnal raids on the back gardens of houses in Münnerstadt and its surrounding villages, a 27-year-old local man has been caught and admitted the crimes, which he said he did "for fun". The police said: "It is not improbable that copycats were also involved." *NBC News, 6 Oct; Times, 7 Oct 2016.*

VIBRATING SPY

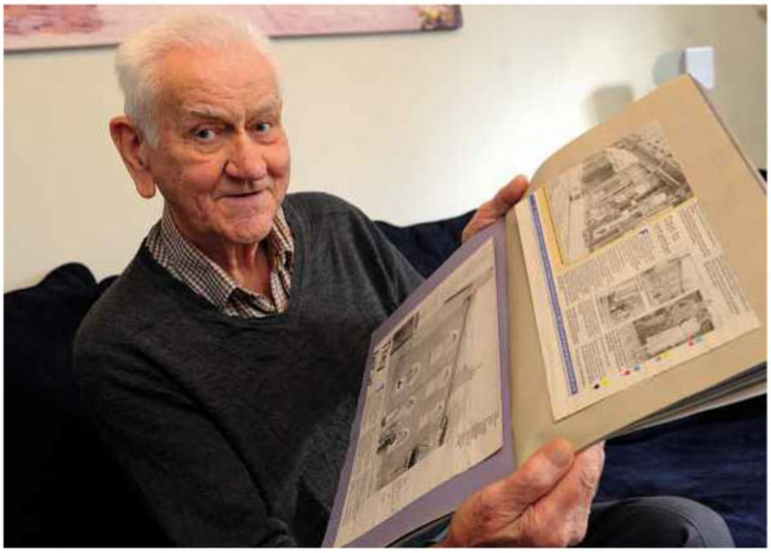
A woman in Chicago, identified as NP, is suing a sex toy firm for allegedly spying on her as she used her vibrator. The We-Vibe can be remotely controlled through a smartphone app that allows people who are not in the same place to swap messages, start video chats and remotely control the device. NP said she didn't realise the maker, Standard Innovation, was "monitoring and recording" her "intimate details… in real time." *D.Mirror online, 26 Sept 2016.*

TORTOISE ADVENTURE

Sarah Joiner, 56, contacted Westminster Council on 5 August, suspecting that Zuma, her 90-year-old tortoise, had crawled into a sack of garden waste. Luckily, the refuse lorry had not yet emptied its 10-ton load into the incinerator in Bermondsey. Ms Joiner and refuse workers trawled through 1,000 rubbish bags using a thermal imaging camera, and found Zuma (short for Montezuma) in a pile of lettuce leaves. He was returned to the home in central London where he had lived for 40 years. *BBC News, 9 Aug; D.Telegraph, 10 Aug 2016.*

The Humber Monster

A witness to the terrifying 1930s sea monster speaks out

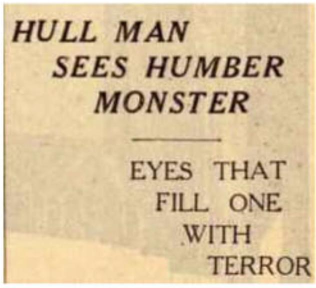


HULL DAILY MAIL

ABOVE: John Cottrell-Smith believes he spotted the Humber Monster in Grimsby in the 1930s, when he saw "four or five humps" offshore.

Local historian Mike Covell is hoping to track down the so-called 'Humber Monster' – the East Coast's answer to Nessie – in time for Hull taking up the title of the UK City of Culture in 2017, and has formed the Humber Monster Watch to monitor the shores of the famous river. "Throughout the 1920s, trawlermen from Hull had reported strange sightings of a creature in the Humber and the North Sea," said Mr Covell. It was said that fishermen had found fragments of their catches hanging on empty hooks. "In 1923, a Hornsea school teacher swimming off the coast was attacked by an unknown sea creature." During that decade, Hull lived in constant fear of the sea beast with numerous sightings – from Hull docks to Grimsby as well as Easington, Spurn Point, Withernsea and Hornsea – and updates in newspaper reports. Eyewitnesses said it had a head the size of an elephant, six humps and terrifying flashing eyes.

In 1934, Thomas Atkinson was walking with his wife and children by the Humber near Kilnsea when they witnessed something black in the water.



HULL MAN SEES HUMBER MONSTER

EYES THAT FILL ONE WITH TERROR

The creature turned to face the family and stared at them until they fled in terror. "I distinctly saw two big ears, each rising up to a point behind these staring eyes," said Mrs Atkinson. "The eyes were terrible. I can't forget them. I was frightened and immediately called the children. The thing swam away, but I hurried on the youngsters' shoes and stockings in double quick time." Another witness was local JP Mr JG Twigg, on a Sunday morning stroll off Withernsea seafront with his grandson. He said: "I saw a large black object going like fury from south to north travelling at an enormous speed – about 100mph [160km/h]. We watched it for five to 10 seconds before it was out of sight." In 1925, a 'giant octopus' was found by fishermen on Withernsea beach, near Hull. It was reportedly about 6ft (1.8m) long with eight tentacles full of suckers.

John Cottrell-Smith, 86, believes he saw the monster on Grimsby Fish Dock's North Wall. Aged six or seven, he was walking with his aunt in the summer of 1936 or 1937 when they both saw something suspicious in the water. "I can still see it in my mind very clearly," he said. "We were just out walking in the evening and we saw these four of five humps about 200 yards offshore. They were moving slowly, disappearing, then appearing again, on view for about two minutes. I was living on the Fish Dock at the time, my dad being the assistant dockmaster. My uncle informed the *Grimsby Telegraph* of the sighting, unbeknown to my aunt who I don't think was too pleased about it, but they referred to it as the 'Loch Ness Monster'. I was never comfortable swimming in the sea at Cleethorpes after that day!"

Mr Cottrell-Smith moved to Hull with his family in 1940, where he has lived ever since, but he never saw anything fitting the monster's description again. Mr Covell said Mr Cottrell-Smith's account tallied well with a spate of similar sightings that were reported in the mid-1930s. "The sightings on record stretch all the way from Whitby down to Skegness, and there's plenty from Grimsby so it fits into the patterns well," he said. Mr Covell is evidently an incurable optimist if he hopes to "track down" the monster, since there is no mention of any sightings in the last 80 years. *Grimsby Telegraph, D.Star, 11 Sept, 3 Oct 2016.*

SIDELINES...

EGGSTRAORDINARY

Ceris Meredith, 54, joint owner of Glyn Peris Guest House in Llanberis, North Wales, found 172 double-yolk eggs in a box of 180, bought from a wholesaler in Bangor and supplied by Oaklands Farm in Ruabon. This was not a special double-yolker box that (we are told) can be bought from some shops. *D.Post (Wales), 4 Aug 2016*.

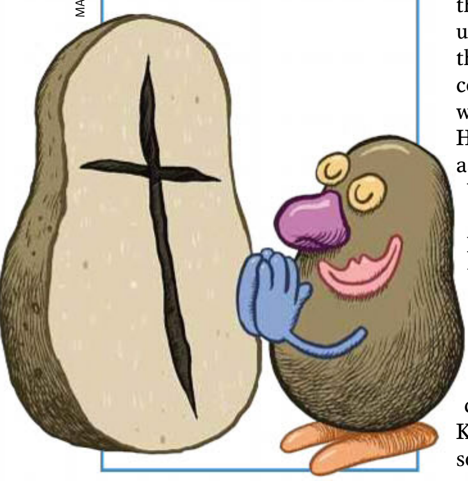
A TASTE FOR BALLS

In September, members of Aldeburgh Golf Club in Suffolk faced an unusual hazard at the 408-yard 14th hole. The club was obliged to introduce a 'local rule' approved by the sport's governing body to take into account 'abnormal conditions'. A large brown Burmese cat called Merlin, living locally, was regularly picking up and carrying away golf balls near the 14th hole. The rule allowed a substitute ball to be dropped without penalty, unless it was in the rough. *D.Mail, 19 Sept 2016.*

HOLY SPUD

Residents of a Quebec old people's home say a potato is giving them strength and comfort. Alain Lévesque, a cook at the centre, was slicing potatoes on 22 August when he revealed a cross in the centre of each half of one blessed spud. Residents were drying it for preservation, and planned to display it along with information about its provenance. *Canada Press, 3 Sept 2016*.

MARTIN ROSS



CLASSIC
TELEVISION
NOW ON BLU-RAY

fabulous
THE COMPLETE COLLECTION
MIAMI VICE
25 DISC SET
FULLY RESTORED AND IN HI-DEFINITION
THE ORIGINAL TV SERIES
THE A TEAM
THE COMPLETE COLLECTION
22 DISC SET
FULLY RESTORED AND IN HI-DEFINITION
THE INCREDIBLE HULK
THE COMPLETE COLLECTION
16 DISC SET
FULLY RESTORED AND IN HI-DEFINITION
TOM SELLECK
MAGNUM P.I.
THE COMPLETE COLLECTION
FULLY RESTORED AND IN HI-DEFINITION
The Water Margin
Fully Restored and Remastered
水滸伝
The Complete Series
"Do not despise the snake for having no horns, for who is to say it will not become a dragon?"
JAN-MICHAEL VINCENT
ERNEST BORGNINE
ALEX CORD
AIRWOLF
THE COMPLETE COLLECTION
SEASONS 1-3
HIGH FLYING ACTION NOW IN HIGH DEFINITION
11 x Discs
FULLY RESTORED COLLECTOR'S EDITION
DAVID HASSELHOFF
KNIGHT RIDER
THE COMPLETE COLLECTION
FULLY RESTORED AND IN HI-DEFINITION

AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD RETAILERS

fabulous

www.fabulousfilms.com

MATT PATTINSON

ARCHÆOLOGY

Our archæological round-up is brought to you by **PAUL DEVEREUX**, Managing Editor of *Time & Mind – The Journal of Archæology, Consciousness and Culture* (www.tandfonline.com/rtam)

YORK UNIVERSITY

ABOVE: The 9,000-year-old polished adze is believed to be the oldest found in Europe.

THERE WAS AN OLD AXE FROM...

In County Limerick, Ireland, there is a burial site dating back over 9,000 years (twice as old as Newgrange) situated on the banks of the river Shannon at Hermitage, Castleconnel. It was discovered 15 years ago, and contained burial pits holding cremated remains. Recovered artefacts have been recently analysed by a team from the Department of Archæology at the University of York, led by Dr Aimée Little. Among the items was a polished shale axehead or adze thought by the team to have been made especially for the funeral of a VIP of the time whose remains were buried at the site. Microscopic analysis has revealed the shale tool, believed to be the earliest fully polished adze in Europe, was only used for a short time, and then deliberately blunted. Dr Little comments that this shows "complex behaviour at play… in terms of the making and treatment of the adze as part of the funerary rights".

"The adze is exceptional as we traditionally associate polished axes and adzes like this with the arrival of agriculture in Europe, around 3,000 years later," adds Ben Elliott, one of the archæologists at York. "Although polished axes and adzes are known from pre-agricultural sites in Ireland and other parts of Europe, to find such a well-made, highly polished and securely dated example is unprecedented for this period of prehistory." *Smithsonian Magazine, 9 Nov 2016.*

DO YOU KNOW WHO WE ARE?

In a presentation given at this year's American Society of Human Genetics Annual Meeting, a team affiliated with the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Texas and the University of Utah announced research indicating that Melanesians carry DNA which seemingly comes from an unknown, extinct hominid. The researchers used, in geek language, "a model they had built using an estimation tool" that showed the transfer of genes between populations in Melanesia seemed to present lineage evidence that could be representing an unknown archaic population. Further research around this is awaited.

While we are about it, there is also another mystery presented by Melanesian people, connected or not with this new potential DNA evidence: their skin is as dark as people from Africa, yet around a quarter of them have blonde hair. So far, no one has come up with a workable explanation. *Phys.Org, 2 Nov 2016.*

TALES OF THE FLOOD

Most scholars have traditionally maintained that oral folklore themes could not persist for more than 800 years, and are usually sceptical of how accurately oral traditions reflect real events, but researchers from Sunshine Coast University and the University of New England challenge those views, as far as Aboriginal Australia is concerned, at any rate. A year ago, in an interesting paper in *Australian Geographer*, which seems to have partially passed 'under the radar', llinguist Nicholas Reid and marine geographer Patrick Nunn argue that 21 indigenous stories from across the Australian continent faithfully record events between 18,000 and 7,000 years ago, when ocean levels rose 120m (394ft) – the postglacial sea level rise documented by marine geographers. Some of the stories are straight factual accounts, telling of the loss of kangaroo hunting grounds, but other, particularly older stories, are allegorical, such as describing how an ancestral being angered by the misbehaviour of a clan punishes it by digging a channel in the ground with a magical kangaroo bone and thus allowing the incursion of seawater to swallow up its territory.

Reid maintains that a characteristic of indigenous preliterate storytelling is that it possesses an inherent "cross-generational cross-checking" process, resulting in a considerable consistency in accounts passed down over long periods of time. "Say I'm a man from central Australia, my father teaches me stories about my country," Reid elaborates. "My sister's children, my nephews and nieces, are explicitly tasked with the kin-based responsibility for ensuring I know those stories properly. They take those responsibilities seriously. At any given point in time my father is telling the stories to me and his grandkids are checking. Three generations are hearing the story at once – that's a kind of scaffolding that can keep stories true. When you have three generations constantly in the know, and tasked with checking as a cultural responsibility, that creates the kind of mechanism that could explain why [Australian Aborigines] seem to have done something that hasn't been achieved elsewhere in the world: telling stories for 10,000 years." *Guardian, 16 Sept 2015.*

THEIR EYES ON THE SKIES

It might be much ado about very little, but not if an ancient Aboriginal stone arrangement known as Wurdi Youang is confirmed as the oldest astronomically aligned monument in the world. The positions of the stones could have enabled the ancient people to map out the movements of the Sun throughout the year, allowing them to mark off the seasons along with the solstices and equinoxes. This type of ancient naked eye astronomy is typically found in association with societies that had some degree of agriculture, and it is the case that the region around Wurdi Youang, in the Victorian bush, seems to have once had semi-permanent villages with evidence of early fishing and farming practices including signs of 'gilgies' – terraces used in farming. This would jar with present White scholarly opinion that Aborigines were ever only nomadic hunter-gatherers. "Evidence of this agriculture may go back tens of thousands of years, pre-dating what anthropologists commonly think of as the dawn of agriculture, which is about 11,000 years ago in Mesopotamia," says the site custodian, Reg Abrahams.

"They understand very well the motions of the Sun, the Moon, the planets and the stars throughout the year and over longer periods of time," states Dr Duane Hamacher, a researcher in indigenous astronomy from Monash University, who is apparently working with Aboriginal elders at the site to reconstruct their astronomical knowledge. Scientific dating of the site is planned. *ABC News, 13 Oct 2016.*

ABOVE: Part of the Aboriginal stone arrangement at Wurdi Youang, Victoria.

CLASSICAL CORNER

FORTEANA FROM THE ANCIENT WORLD COMPILED BY BARRY BALDWIN

207: AMONG THE TRUMPS, HA HA

(Apologies to the OT, Job 39.25; for second titular choice. I might have Beatled towards A HARD DAZED KNIGHT)

So, 'The Donald-Elect' is in a tantrum over some mild criticisms directed at his VEEP stooge, Mike Pence, from a cast member of the Broadway musical *Hamilton*.

A case of No Spence Spared?

Just as well for this ungracious pair that we are not in the Athens of 424 BC. In that year, Aristophanes presented at the Lenaia (Festival of the Wine-Skins) competition for stage comedies his second extant (we have 11 of his 40-something output) play, *The Knights*.

If you happen not to have the Greek, he is best read in Alan Sommerstein's logodædalian Penguin translation, or in the old Loeb (sadly replaced) by Benjamin Bickley Rogers who put them into Gilbert & Sullivan-style metres – especially *HMS Pinafore* – arguably the most authentic way of Englishing them.

DON EMMERT / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

The play opens with Nicias and Demosthenes – two of Athens's best generals – slaves of the gullible old fool Demos (People) who represents the Athenian Democracy, still the most genuine of them all, if you read Peter Jones's weekly *Spectator* columns – trying to find a way to get rid of a higher-up colleague and his harassments.

This character in the play is dubbed the 'Paphlagonian", i.e. 'Windbag', a term I always thought right for Obama – not forgetting Neil Kinnock, of course. In reality, he is Cleon, the most influential demagogue of the day, billed by Thucydides as "the most violent man in the state," famous for his war-mongering speeches in the People's Assembly and blustering promises to put Athens first and make her great – now very familiar-sounding slogans, also notorious for his litigiousness, a pre-American Athenian mania, satirised later by Aristophanes in his *Wasps* – Aristophanes and Thucydides themselves were two of his courtroom victims, hence in part their animosity.

There is a story that the stage mask-makers were afraid to create a genuine face for Cleon – how would they have tackled Trump's surrealistic locks? – also that no actor dared play him, so Aristophanes stepped in and did the part himself.

Cleon wasn't infamous for bizarre trichology, but was said to have been the first orator to bounce around the stage, whilst slapping his thigh, a rather impressive physical feat, less sinister (and less Hillarious?) than Trump looming over Clinton's shoulder in their debates.

His two servile victims manage to steal some secret oracles which Cleon – think Trump's tax-returns – had kept secret. One of these predicts that the Paphlagonian can be worsted (or, do I mean Wursted?) by a sausage seller even more effectively scurrilous in verbal cutting-contests – as TS Eliot didn't quite say, With a Banger, Not a Whimper.

Conveniently, they spot an itinerant sausage-seller passing by, enlist his help with promises of political power, and in a series of shouting-matches, he, after accusing his rival of having no real concern for working people and pretending to take moral stands – notably an anti-buggery campaign – to manipulate them for electoral gain, wins these notably rowdy and vulgar debates, and replaces Mr Windbag who is consigned to flog sausages at the city gates as his comeuppance – Athens already had long walls, so no need to promise to build one to keep people out.

When the *Hamilton* cast-member stepped forward to challenge Pence, he was 'doing an Aristophanes', in that the latter would have his Chorus members step forward and address the audience directly – a regular comic stage mcguffin known as the Parabasis.

Compared to these Athenian tirades, the American thespian offered very small beer. Wind-bag/Cleon is accused of everything, from blackmail to financial swindles to – You Name It. Here's a typical example (Sommerstein's translation):

O villain and monster and screamer so base,
The whole of the city is full of your face!
O'er all the Assembly and all of the courts,
Indictments and taxes and tolls at the ports,
Are spread your offences.
You stir up the mud and you muddy the stream,
You've made all of Athens stone-deaf with your scream,
And drained her of money.

Mind you, Aristophanes could have given Trump lessons in the art of character-smearing. Here's the Chorus's verbal assassination of a certain Ariphrades, a real Athenian – possibly, like Cleon himself, present in the audience, notorious for his taste for female secretions and all-round kinkiness:

He isn't just a villain, for that's common nowadays,
Nor yet a super-villain – he has new unheard-of ways.
He prostitutes his tongue: in black-and-white to put it down,
He cunnilingus practises on all the whores in town.
Whoever loathes not such a man or holds he doesn't stink
Shall never from one cup with me at any party drink.

The Knights won first prize. Audience reaction probably helped the judges to their verdict, their version of Carroll Levis's Clapometer – older FT readers will understand.

Didn't hurt Cleon, though, unlike his next year's play *The Clouds*, which Socrates at his trial thought had dangerously damaged his reputation. Cleon was presently elected a general, famously promising to beat the Spartans in a military campaign within 20 days, a boast called "insane" by Thucydides – but Cleon pulled it off.

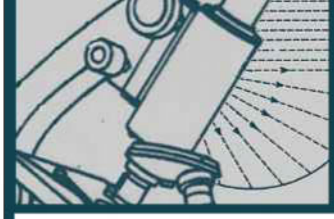
Two years later, he was dead, killed in battle, "a coward's death," gibed Thucydides. After him came Hyperbolus, ostracised after a stitch-up by political rivals, murdered in exile. Trump is a good argument for reviving ostracism, though it would be said of him as it was of Hyperbolus: "The man deserved the fate, the fate did not deserve the man."

Then came Cleophon, who once appeared in the Assembly drunk and wearing a breastplate, bawled a Death or Glory speech, and was presently executed – for evading military service.

Why am I thinking of George 'Dubya' Bush?

Not likely that Trump will fall in combat with ISIS. But, his New York City is famous for its street-corner tasty (*experto credite*) hot dog vendors, so who knows..?

"As to credulity, I know of no limits for it" – Fort, *Books*, p110 – Trump's supporters well fit that bill…



MATT PATTINSON

"I READ SOMEWHERE THAT..."

In the 'post-truth', anti-expert world of President Elect Donald Trump, funding for science in the US could be heading in some interesting new directions says **DAVID HAMBLING**...

The surprise election of President Donald Trump was hailed, or bewailed, as the triumph of 'post-truth politics,' in which disproven claims were still repeated endlessly and apparently believed. Trump himself has often been called 'anti-science' and is openly sceptical of experts. Now he is in charge of a scientific superpower, is there a new hope for supporters of chemtrails and other fringe science?

The signs suggest that the new president will be more receptive to ideas from the far left-field than his predecessors, especially on atmospheric science, where he loudly rejects the mainstream view. He has famously declared that climate change is a hoax, and that the US will pull out of the Paris Agreement, but there is more. In August, the *New Yorker* reported Trump complaining about regulations to protect the ozone layer, which had affected the quality of his hairspray. He noted that he used his hairspray indoors, so it could not possibly affect the ozone layer.

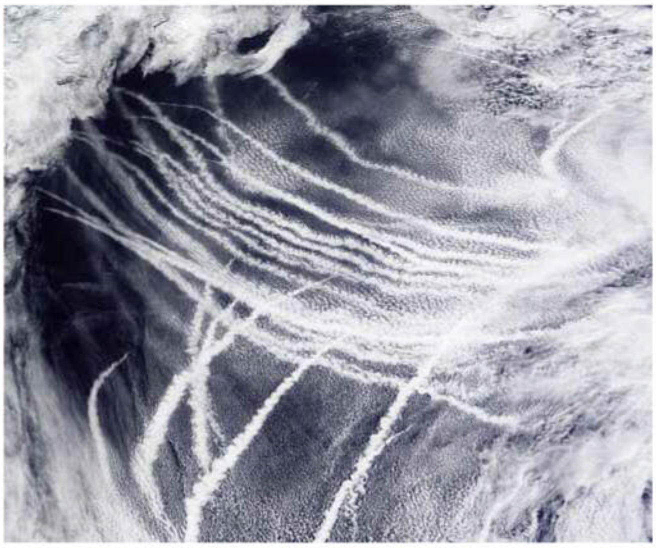
"I say, no way, folks. No way," he told a cheering crowd.

A *Scientific American* headline described Trump as "shockingly ignorant" on science, citing his claims that wind farms and environmentally friendly lightbulbs harm health, while fracking poses "zero health risks".

Chemtrail theorists believe that commercial airliners are secretly injecting chemicals into their exhausts, leaving distinctive, long-lasting contrails. The composition of the chemicals, and the motivation behind the operation are not clear, but they are seen to be sinister. A major objection to chemtrail theory is that it would require a vast, secret conspiracy.

However, the new president is receptive to conspiracy theories. "The Definitive Trump Conspiracy Guide" on the Altanet site lists 58 conspiracy theories that Trump is known to have espoused. He has suggested that President Obama is a Muslim, and has been secretly arming IS, and had people murdered to cover up the fact that he was not born in the US. In the science field, Trump has supported claims that vaccines cause autism and the CDC covered up how infectious the Ebola virus was.

Radio host and conspiracy theorist Alex Jones says he has "personally advised" Trump during the election. Jones is a major purveyor of chemtrail theory. A recent headline on his Infowars website asks: "Did the Chemtrail Flu Kill Prince and Merle Haggard?" This reveals that a mysterious illness has been spreading across America "coinciding with massive chemtrail spraying – and it's possible the two are linked." No evidence is presented for either the mystery illness or the massive chemtrails; these are givens. Jones and others like him may have the President's ear in the new administration. And Trump, the eternal outsider, may be actively seeking an alternative to the inconvenient truths served up by mainstream scientists, such as those who reject chemtrails.



Trump will be more receptive to ideas from the far left-field

The first-ever peer-reviewed paper on the chemtrail issue was published in August in the journal *Environmental Research Letters*. Researchers headed by Steven Davis from the University of California, Irvine, surveyed 77 scientists, a mixture of atmospheric chemists working with condensation trails and geochemists working with atmospheric dust and pollution. The participants were asked to evaluate scientifically claims on chemtrail theory. One set of questions related to photographs put forward by believers as good evidence of chemtrails rather than normal contrails, the other asked about four reports of allegedly abnormal concentrations of particular chemicals in the soil following contrails.

On the first set of questions, 100% of the participants concluded that each of the photographs was a contrail rather than a chemtrail, and there was general agreement in each case as to the exact cause (altitude, humidity, presence of dust or ice crystals etc). In the second set there was about 85% agreement that the material analysis was not anomalous or there was a simple explanation; most of the others were "Not Sure". Only one expert believed that a high concentration of barium in one of the analyses might be evidence of airborne spraying. The overwhelming conclusion of the report was that, even in the face of the best evidence for chemtrails, aircraft contrails are just water.

Naturally the chemtrail community remained unconvinced and responded robustly. "Sure they are contrails," reposted one commenter on social media, going on to link the scientific and political conspiracy theories, "and Hillary Clinton is not a murderer nor a liar."

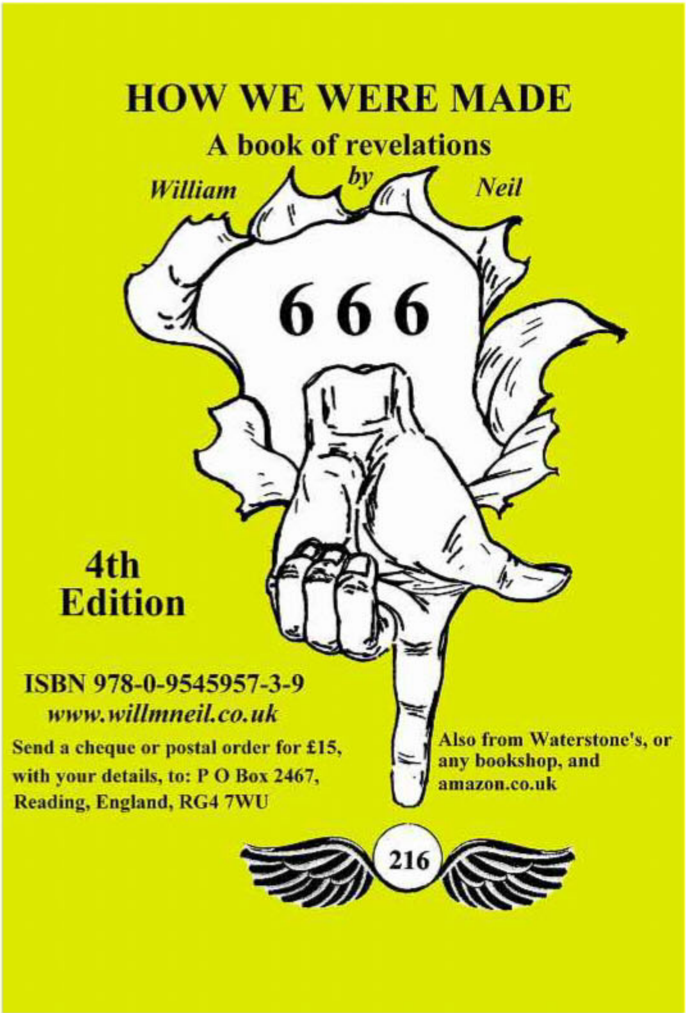
Perhaps Trump needs different experts, such as those publicising a new threat: aquatrails. The latest claims, and the term aquatrail itself, are attributed to oceanographers at the Wyoming Institute of Technology (WIT). Aquatrails are the exhaust trails left by ships, which, according to some reports, are more persistent than they should be, suggesting more chemical trails.

It has long been known that ships leave contrails, just as aircraft do. NASA calls them "ship tracks" and publishes pictures of them from space (pictured, left). They occur with a ship that produces an exhaust with a lot of particulates, and form in humid conditions when there is little wind. NASA's photos have previously been used to discredit claims that ship tracks were sinister chemtrails.

Those promoting the new claims may have failed to realise that WIT is not a real organisation; there is a clue in the name. Its website, witscience.org, is subtle satire, or possibly performance art. Much of it seems plausible until you read statements such as a claim that they won Nobel Peace Prize in 2000 for stopping the "Y2K virus," and discovering the site constantly refers to non-existent people and research. Mischievous stories on the WIT website troll the gullible with suggestions that marijuana cures AIDS... and that chemtrails cause cancer.

However, in the post-fact world, an institution being fictitious may no longer matter. On the campaign trail, Trump sometimes prefaced his comments with "I read somewhere that..." to convey authority, before launching into a diatribe. Perhaps this was just campaigning rhetoric, but if Trump's science policy is genuinely determined by what he "read somewhere", then we are in for an interesting four years.

Chemtrail researchers, start working on those bids for government funding.



HOW WE WERE MADE

A book of revelations

William *by* *Neil*

4th Edition

ISBN 978-0-9545957-3-9

www.willmneil.co.uk

Send a cheque or postal order for £15, with your details, to: P O Box 2467, Reading, England, RG4 7WU

Also from Waterstone's, or any bookshop, and amazon.co.uk

Brien Foerster
Andrew Collins
Robert Bauval
Hugh Newman
Yousef & Patricia
James Swagger

MEGALITHOMANIA TOURS 2017

ANGKOR WAT & GUNUNG PADANG TOUR
MARCH 17TH-31ST 2017
WITH ANDREW COLLINS & HUGH NEWMAN

ANCIENT ARMENIA & GEORGIA TOUR
MAY/JUNE 2017, *PLUS GOBEKLI TEPE/VAN ADD-ON*
WITH ANDREW COLLINS & HUGH NEWMAN

MEGALITHIC ODYSSEY IRELAND TOUR
AUGUST 1ST-7TH 2017
WITH JAMES SWAGGER & HUGH NEWMAN

ANCIENT EGYPT & BAALBEK TOUR
OCTOBER 2017 *WITH THE KHEMIT SCHOOL*

MEGALITHS & GIANTS SARDINIA TOUR
OCTOBER 21ST-28TH 2017
WITH JAMES SWAGGER & HUGH NEWMAN

PERU, BOLIVIA & EASTER ISLAND TOUR
NOVEMBER 2017
WITH ROBERT BAUVAL, BRIEN FOERSTER & HUGH NEWMAN

ANCIENT OLMEC & MAYAN MEXICO
FEBRUARY 2018
WITH BRIEN FOERSTER & HUGH NEWMAN

www.megalithomania.co.uk
info@megalithomania.co.uk

PRIVATE TOURS:
STONEHENGE,
AVEBURY,
GLASTONBURY

The Meaningful Chocolate® Company
making a big chunk of difference™
St PAUL'S
Richard III

It's enough to make you scream?

We asked Tate Modern to switch to a Fairtrade tourist bar and they said it does not *'fit our current plans'*

Most tourist attractions sell souvenir chocolate bars. You know the sort of thing, they usually have a picture of the attraction on the wrapper?

What you may not have noticed is that they are usually made from non Fairtrade chocolate.

It's as if the ethical consumer revolution never happened. Venues could easily switch to Fairtrade but they make excuses. So now we need your help.

Join the Fair Tourism Bar Campaign and help change the tourist industry. It can be done. In the 1980s we all put pressure on supermarkets to stock Fairtrade products or switch their own brands to Fairtrade.

www.FairTouristBars.uk

FAIR TOURIST BAR CAMPAIGN

Pictured above - bars from attractions who have switched

Join the campaign now

Sign our Change.org petition, nominate an attraction at **www.FairTouristBars.uk**, write, message or Facebook your favourite attraction asking them to make the switch to a fair tourist bar.

MATT PATTINSON

ALAN MURDIE asks whether station ghosts vanished along with the romance of rail travel...

HAUNTED RAILWAY STATIONS

In the spring of 2016, stories of a haunted railway station at Macquarie Fields, in New South Wales, Australia, became international news. As they reached the UK (especially via *D.Telegraph* and *D.Mail* on line 20-22 April 2016 and newscom.au 28 April 2016) it was being claimed that "late at night, when it's still, and last trains have pulled out, 'faint crying' can be heard carried on the breeze at Macquarie Fields station." Even more remarkable, an apparition of "a young girl wearing dancing clothes, covered in what looked like to be blood in her chest area" was appearing "moaning and groaning" on the platform. Claims were also advanced that the ghostly girl "sits in the middle of the station, and just stares and cries" at the times when the station is almost empty. Beautifully summed up in headlines such as "She shrieks in terror: Ghost hunters say phantom teenage girl haunts Sydney train station wearing blood-stained clothes while roaming the platform" (*D.Mail*, Australian on-line version) it was suggested that the haunting stemmed from the lonely and tortured spirit of a teenage girl named Emily Gengeson, killed by a train at the station way back in 1906.

From a British perspective, this Australian railway haunting sounds like a tale from another era – though the phantom weeping girl might be a symbol of the feelings of many frustrated UK train passengers of recent years. With a few exceptions, it is currently hard to conceive of much in the way of ghostly goings-on across Britain's railways. Save for a few precious lines where scenery still qualifies as captivating or even breathtaking, any romance associated with railway travel in the British Isles has been gnawed away over the last half-century, first by state-imposed 'Beeching cuts' in the 1960s and then by privatisation from the 1990s. Unlike the old-style compartments that typified the days of steam, it is well nigh impossible for even the most imaginative passenger to conceive having a spectral adventure aboard a UK train today.

The cramped and constipated condition of many carriages, resembling packed airline cabins, and the profusion of functional plastic and steel within modern stations, seem more likely to provoke frustrated poltergeist activity than ever draw forth any apparition. Indeed, some researchers have actually considered that ghosts have been absent from the British railway scene for much longer. In 1938, philosopher and psychical researcher Professor HH Price, discussing apparitions in his presidential address to the Society for Psychical Research, remarked: "What about railway stations? Arrivals and departures often cause extremely strong emotions. So even if we say that great intensity of emotion is a necessary condition of haunting, even so it would seem that there ought to be a great deal more haunting than there actually is." (*Proceedings of the SPR* 45 1938-39 p.336).

Macquarie Fields

ABOVE: Macquarie Fields railway station in New South Wales, Australia, has seen reports of the apparition of a girl in bloodstained clothes.

> "LATE AT NIGHT, FAINT CRYING CAN BE HEARD ON THE BREEZE..."

Thus, the now widely circulated story from Macquarie Fields suggests for British readers, at least, that a chance of a tantalising ghostly encounter might still remain somewhere on the Australian railway network, perhaps on a far-flung stretch of track running through one of the uninhabited regions of the Outback.

Alas, a very small amount of probing of the story soon establishes such a hope to be illusory, for a closer examination of the Macquarie Fields 'haunted station' claims soon reveals them to have less than substantial foundations.

Firstly, Macquarie Fields is not the remote outpost one might imagine from the press descriptions, but rather a station in a suburb of Sydney, forming part of a busy integrated network. Secondly, the evocative detail of ghostly screaming "once the last train pulls out" at night is pure journalistic licence, for a perfunctory check of the on-line timetable for Macquarie Fields station swiftly establishes it is served at regular hourly intervals through the night by an airport-bound train. Therefore there can technically be no 'last train' to signal the onset of screaming. Furthermore, the ghost claims seem to have arisen in conjunction with a local newspaper campaign for installing lifts at the station platforms; commuters have apparently been waiting for such fixtures for years. Tossing the claim of a ghost waiting at the station into the media mix was certainly one way to increase attention on the place and their predicament.

Concerning the alleged manifestations themselves, these seem to have been derived from rumours originally posted on line in 2014 by a small Australian ghost research group, the self-styled "Sydney Spirit Stalkers". As well as stalking the paranormal, the group has the laudable ancillary aim of seeking "to resurrect historic places so they do not just disappear". But upon applying critical scrutiny to their reports of the weeping girl of Macquarie Fields, it proves to be based upon nothing more than that "Someone has once reported that they swear they saw a young girl wearing dancing clothes". Consequently, with a lack of identifiable source, any critical reader may reasonably conclude that the Macquarie Fields haunting can enjoy no higher status than folklore or urban legend – not that this proved any bar to it being widely circulated and reported and syndicated by the press.

But such a dismissal might just be premature, for just a week after the media headlines, a named witness did emerge to declare that the station was considered haunted back in the 1950s. The man claiming first-hand knowledge of a haunting at Macquarie Fields was Mr Terry Davis, 76, who on reading the current accounts in the *MacArthur Chronicle*, allegedly responded by shouting, "It's true, it's true, it's true", for the story had taken him back to his days in the mid-1950s when, aged 16, he was working as a junior station assistant. (See *MacArthur Chronicle,* 29 April 2016, carried on dailytelegraph.au.com)

Unfortunately, precise details of his experiences are again unclear. The report stated that he had 'seen' the ghostly girl, but this was not substantiated in any quotations directly attributed to Mr Davis. Nonetheless he was convinced of paranormal activity, and of a low-level haunting concentrated upon the booking office and platform, stating: "You would think there was someone walking up and down the gravel platform, but when I looked outside there was no one there. I would turn the radiator on in the booking office but it was still freezing. It would never heat up. You always had this feeling that someone was there. It was a really scary place to work."

Being a subjective experience, a feeling of a presence is an extremely hard one to analyse objectively. Such sensations – like those sometimes felt by mountaineers and explorers undergoing physical stress – were considered by Graham Reed in *The Psychology of Anomalous Experience: A Cognitive Approach* (1972). Reed proposed those susceptible to a sense of presence underwent cognitive changes, generated by the witness's own mental outlook when placed for prolonged periods in eerie surroundings. The human mind infuses a correspondingly eerie content into a natural stimulus such as a draught, cloud shadow or echo – stimuli themselves startling in a relatively silent and seemingly unvarying environment. The experiments by Professor Richard Wiseman in the Edinburgh Vaults and Hampton Court in 2003 may encourage the view that subliminal perceptions of features of the environment, such as magnetic fields, can trigger such experiences. (See 'An investigation into the alleged haunting of Hampton Court Palace: psychological variables and magnetic fields' by R Wiseman, C Watt, E Greening, P Stevens, and C O'Keeffe (2002) in the *Journal of Parapsychology*, 66(4), 387-408.) Normally occurring sounds, particularly at night, may also be subject to distortion and misperception as something ghostly by already primed witnesses, as studies of replayed Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP) recordings continue to expose.

However, both the Edinburgh Vaults and Hampton Court experiments were conducted at places already long notorious for their traditions of hauntings, whilst Reed's study focused principally on individuals in extreme situations like that of Joshua Slocum (1844-1909), the first lone circumnavigator of the globe, who believed he was guided through a storm by a phantom helmsman. Similarly, yachtsman Sir Francis Chichester (1901-1972) told ghost hunter Peter Underwood of undergoing a terrifying paranormal experience during a lengthy solo voyage, though refusing to disclose details. However, in a subsequent published account, it appears Sir Francis also had the sense of being benevolently supervised. (See *Haunted London*, 1973, by Peter Underwood and *Alone Across the Atlantic*, 1968, by Francis Chichester. See also *The Third Man Factor: Surviving the Impossible* by John Geiger, Canongate, 2009, reviewed **FT255:61**).

Could such experiences also arise in the relatively stable environment of a small railway station near Sydney, early in the morning simply when no trains were passing and no passengers were present?

Of course, depending on one's perspective, the fact of Mr Davis being a teenager at the time might strengthen or detract from the credibility of his experience. Puberty and the peak sensory abilities of youth are often associated with paranormal experiences. Alternatively, an inexperienced or excitable young man placed alone in a wholly new and isolated environment might fall prey to suggestion (or conceivably be the victim of pranks). Regrettably, without more information about either the witness or the conditions at the time, it is really impossible to determine what precisely occurred. But clearly the experiences of Mr Davis, if considered evidential, are a long way from a blood-spattered apparition and screams that "begin and become much louder" over the tracks at Macquarie Fields. Nonetheless, his emergence as a witness at least raises a possibility that contemporary claims are an inflated version of earlier, genuine experiences, for pursuing a folkloric story to its origins does not inevitably lead to it evaporating exactly like an insubstantial phantom.

Following up a number of what seemed purely folkloric ghosts, I have eventually traced written accounts from 19th century witnesses preserved by research societies (for example, at Rushbrooke Hall in Suffolk and Woodhouselee in Lothian in Scotland late Victorian correspondents detailed personal experiences of manifestations that were never published and simply slipped into local legend). But whatever the case, the weeping female spectre at Macquarie Fields demonstrates no capacity for original invention, being identical with ubiquitous stories of a shrieking or weeping woman in white throughout Europe and North and Latin America.

What of the claimed death of the teenage girl in 1906? Local historians and librarians have confirmed that there was no Emily Gengeson but there was an Emily Hay Georgenson who was horrifically killed near Macquarie Fields on the afternoon of 7 July 1906. Gleanings from the *Cumberland Argus* and other contemporary newspapers declare she was "literally cut to pieces" on the line. Prior to the accident, Emily had been a patient at a private hospital at Wahroonga, suffering from insomnia and 'melancholia', to the point that she been hospitalised in a 'lunatic asylum'. On the day she died, she was going to visit relatives, accompanied by a nurse to watch over her, but had managed to evade supervision. Boarding a train at Glenfield station, she got out at Macquarie Fields where she then knelt down in the path of an oncoming train. The coroner reached a verdict of suicide. However, Emily was no teenager but a woman of 42, having been born in 1864, apparently inconsistent with the claim of a teenage spectre (see http://campbelltown-library.blogspot.co.uk/2016/04/who-was-macquarie-fields-train-station.html)

Meanwhile, although I have complained that any sense of nostalgia and romance has been wrung out of the UK rail network today, there are still occasionally scattered reports of hauntings emerging from the functional minimalism of stations, even if these accounts are little better substantiated than those at Macquarie Fields. In October 2011 the railway station at Preston in Lancashire began to host the first of a series of investigations, following reports of sightings "of a ghost in the haunted clock tower and spectres in the office". Ms Sharon South, a clerical support officer at Preston, gathered accounts ahead of a series of special charitable ghost hunts at the station, which continued on into autumn 2015. (*Lancashire Evening Post*, 8 Sept 2011; pers. comm. at Preston station, 22 Sept 2015.)

In 2014 Carlisle station was proclaimed Britain's 'most haunted station' with the *Sun* newspaper recounting what it at least described as "rumours" that a "headless man" roamed platform 8, whilst a veiled woman "lurked in the undercroft". The source was apparently staff from Virgin trains – but as so often there was a lack of detailed witness testimony. (*Sun*, 30 Oct 2014.) More such stories may remain to be collected and I therefore could be premature in my pessimistic assessment of the chances of haunting experiences on British stations today. Certainly, the network is still the scene to numerous human dramas and traumas of all kinds and, despite obsessions with safety and security, it remains a shocking and neglected fact that fatal accidents, suicides and occasional homicides are currently occurring upon the British railway system almost every day. Deaths on the UK rail network reached an 11-year high in 2014-2015 with at least 332 people killed, and in November 2016, just as I write these lines, there has occurred the tragedy of seven people killed after a tram left its tracks two stops from East Croydon station in London. In light of such shocking statistics and the human tragedies behind them, it would not be surprising if new claims of ghostly experiences were to be reported across UK railways in the next few years.

ABOVE: Carlisle station is said to be Britain's most haunted.

DEPARTURE DENIED

When death claims a loved one, some people simply decide to hang on to the mortal remains for as long as possible...

- Rita Wolfensohn, a legally blind hoarder, always wondered what had become of her son 20 years ago. She apparently thought he had left home without saying anything. On 15 September her sister-in-law Josette Buchman visited the dilapidated house on Avenue N near East 22nd Street in New York; Rita was in hospital and needed some things, and Ms Buchman was helping out. Upstairs, in a bedroom, she found the son's skeleton, dressed in jeans, socks and a shirt, lying on a thin mattress on the floor. Cobwebs and garbage filled the room and the smell of decaying food had long replaced any odour of rotting flesh. Wolfensohn had two sons, Michael and Louis. Relatives said they had not seen Louis – who today would be 49 years old – in 20 years. Michael died in 2003 at the age of 38. *D.Mirror (online), 26 Sept 2016.*

- Marcel H, 79, is thought to have died of asthma in November 2012, but his 69-year-old wife slept next to his corpse for almost a year because she couldn't bear to report his death. The dry and warm conditions caused the body to mummify and the Belgian authorities only became suspicious after the landlord claimed the couple hadn't paid rent for many months. Officials then made the grisly discovery. A newspaper published striking pictures of a body with a long white moustache, sunken eye sockets and protruding rib cage, covered in dry skin. *D.Mail, (Sydney) D.Telegraph, 21 Nov 2013.*

- Police in Argentina checking reports of a bad smell found a dead man sitting at a table, next to the mummified remains of his mother. Claudio Alferi died of natural causes in December 2013 after keeping his 90-year-old mother's death a secret for a decade. Police said the body of Margarita Amaz was "lovingly" wrapped in plastic at the house near Buenos Aires. She still had her slippers on. *Sun, D.Mirror, 11 Jan 2014.*

LONDON STEREOSCOPIC COMPANY / HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES

- On 10 March 2014 Philipe Brough, 54, admitted having kept his mother's corpse in a freezer for six months because he was afraid of being evicted from her council flat in Somers Town, Portsmouth. He had found 90-year-old Louise Brough dead in bed in late February 2013 and placed her in the upright freezer, dressed in her nightclothes. He then claimed £5,390 over six months for her pension and benefits he got as her carer. Police broke in after neighbours said they had not seen the old lady for a long time. Brough was given an eight-month suspended sentence. *D.Mirror, D.Telegraph, 11 Mar 2014.*

- When the reclusive Martin Ames, 55, died of lung cancer, his brother Alan, 61, discovered the skeleton of their mother Doris Ames in the front room of the family home in Bexleyheath, southeast London. It was the first time he had visited the dilapidated semi-detached house for over 10 years after a row with his brother. Detective reckoned the elderly widow's body had been in the house for at least a decade. *D.Mail, 25 Aug 2014.*

- Police found the body of Caroline Jessett, 50, in the bedroom of the family house in Littlemore, Oxfordshire, on 21 November 2013. She was thought to have died from a brain tumour up to a year earlier and her body was described as "mummified". Neighbours had called environmental health officers because of concerns about the safety of the property. The house was declared structurally unsound, with holes in the floors and walls, and had to be made safe before investigations could continue. A week later, the body of Caroline Jessett's mother Pauline, 78, was discovered in the downstairs bath, covered with blankets and sheets. She was identified from a serial number on her artificial hip. An inquest heard it was likely she had died in March 2012 and her daughter had been unable to cope. *BBC News, 13 Aug; Metro, 15 Aug 2014.*

- A man hid his dead grandmother in a fridge for several months so he could carry on collecting her pension. Sava Lukas, 25, told neighbours that Alzbeta Lukas, 82, had gone to stay with relatives. He was rumbled by the smell coming from the flat in Krompachy, Slovakia. *Sun on Sunday, 19 April 2015.*

- Kenneth Brown, 94, was placed in his favourite armchair by his son Timothy, 59, after falling in his bedroom in Stafford in June 2014. The son found his father dead in the chair the next day, but couldn't bear to tell the authorities. Four months later, a neighbour called round and saw the pyjama-clad skeletal remains of the elder Brown slumped in his chair while his son watched television. A post-mortem could not determine cause of death. The son was arrested but not charged. *D.Telegraph, Sun, 28 Nov 2015.*

- A Munich woman slept with her mother's body for five years after she died aged 83. Concerned neighbours called the authorities, who found the mummified corpse in the same bed as her 55-year-old daughter. *MX News (Australia), 19 Nov 2014.*

- A grief-stricken Chinese man kept his wife's body in the freezer for five months after she died from leukæmia. Jiang Maode talked to Yang Huiqing's spirit for an hour every night and regularly placed flowers on the freezer lid, but police in Deyang, Sichuan province, said the arrangement was illegal. *Metro, 19 May 2015.*

- In February 2014 a reclusive 66-year-old woman was found living with the decomposed body of her mother, who was thought to have died several years earlier. Police discovered the body in the women's shared home in the village of Mael-Carhaix, northwestern Brittany. The mother, born in 1921, had not been seen since 2010. *(Queensland) Courier Mail, 10 Feb 2014.*

- A sex shop worker mummified his dead mother's body using salt, then pocketed her £160 pension every month for three years. Vladimir Leonidov, 60, was arrested after neighbours complained about the terrible smell coming from the flat in Yessentuki, southwest Russia. Leonidov had used a dummy dressed in his mother's clothes to make it look as if she were still alive. "We would see his mother sitting outside on the balcony," said neighbour Evgeniya Tyurina. "Her body would be covered in blankets and we noticed she would not move or return our greetings. We thought it was because of her age." Cue the inevitable reference to Hitchcock's *Psycho*. *Metro, 30 Oct 2015.*

For the last round-up of kept corpses, see **FT327:4**

ALIEN ZOO

KARL SHUKER presents his regular round-up from the cryptozoological garden

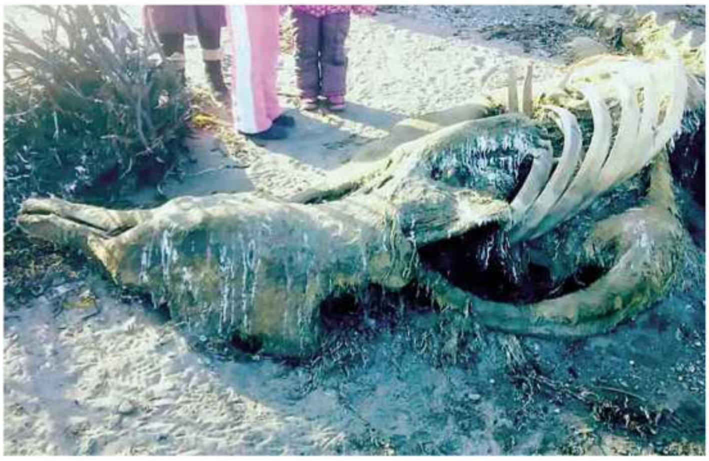
A VERY IFFY ICHTHYOSAUR

On 9 November 2016, the international media reported the recent discovery of a very large sea creature's carcass on the beach in the village of Illyinskoye, in the Sakhalin Oblast region of Russia's Far East. What made this carcass unusually newsworthy is that, based upon the single published photograph, claims had been made earlier online that it is actually the decaying carcass of a modern-day ichthyosaur – as a result of which the photo had quickly gone viral. The ichthyosaur was one of the great maritime fish-lizards of prehistory, named after its striking outward similarity to fishes, but which wasn't known to have survived beyond the Mesozoic Era.

Now, conversely, in the 9 November reports, Russian scientists, including Nickolay Kim from the Sakhalin Research Centre, claimed that it is more likely to be a psychologically depressed dolphin that had committed suicide by beaching itself. It was immediately clear to me from the photograph that the creature is a cetacean and not an ichthyosaur or any other kind of reptile. Based upon its head and jaws, however, I cannot rule out the possibility that it is a beaked whale (ziphiid) rather than a dolphin. It is interesting to note that the media reports claim that this creature is "huge" while providing no specific measurements. Yet if it is indeed very big, this again points to it being a ziphiid, probably a Baird's beaked whale (*Berardius bairdii* – one of two currently recognised species of giant beaked whale), which when mature can attain a total length of up to 40ft (12m) and possibly even more (i.e. far bigger than any dolphin species). In addition, this particular ziphiid species is known to exist in the icy waters off Sakhalin Oblast.

I also uncovered a slightly earlier Russian-language article documenting the carcass, published by the SakhalinMedia.ru website, but this didn't provide any measurements for it either. As for the all-important photograph of the carcass: German cryptozoological researcher Markus Hemmler, who also favours a Baird's beaked whale identity, ascertained that the picture had been snapped by an Instagram member with the username anhelina65, who had uploaded it onto Instagram in early November. So, not a prehistoric survivor after all, but instead merely an unfortunate (albeit impressively sized) cetacean that had met a sad end on a beach in Russia's remote and icy eastern wastelands.

http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/prehistoric-sea-monster-washes-up-9225750 9 Nov 2016; http://sakhalinmedia.ru/news/incidents/07.11.2016/543687/ogromniy-trup-strannogo-zhivotnogo-napugal-zhiteley-sahalina.html 7 Nov 2016; https://www.instagram.com/p/BMdHXeKDfUT/ early Nov 2016.



ABOVE: A number of strange-looking carcases have washed up in the Far East of Russia in recent years, occasioning claims of dead sea monsters. The latest was identified by some as a decaying modern-day ichthyosaur; it's more likely a Baird's beaked whale. **BELOW**: Might the north of Canada be home to an unrecognised species of Caribou?

JEFF J MITCHELL / GETTY IMAGES

A CRYPTIC CARIBOU IN CANADA?

In North America, reindeer *Rangifer tarandus* are referred to as caribou, three distinct types of which are known to exist in the Sahtú region of Arctic northern Canada – but might there also be a fourth type there, one that is currently unrecognised by science?

The three known types are the barren ground, the mountain woodland, and the boreal woodland, all of which exhibit distinctly different lifestyles and inhabit different habitats. However, the Dene people who live in this region recognise the existence of an additional caribou type that they distinguish from all others. They call this alleged fourth type the 'tęnatł'əa' or 'fast runner'. According to Leon Andrew, who is himself Dene and works as an advisor to the Sahtú Renewal Resource Board, which in turn works with the RRCs (Renewal Resource Councils) to manage wildlife across the region, he remembers family members talking about them and how the Dene elders would claim that this caribou type's ears were more pointed than those of other caribou. He also notes that his people surely would not have a specific name for this caribou if it were not indeed unique. Consequently, he is now hoping that the Sahtú Renewal Resource Board will promote searches for the mysterious 'tęnatł'əa' and determine, if it does exist, whether or not it is a distinct undocumented caribou type in its own right.

http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20161115-there-may-be-a-type-of-caribou-that-science-never-noticed 16 Nov 2016.

A HERTFORDSHIRE LEOPARD HUNT... IN 1836

As I note in my foreword to his new book, *Muirhead's Mysteries* (CFZ Press, 2016), British crypto-researcher Richard Muirhead has an uncanny 'wild talent' for uncovering long-buried, previously unpublicised snippets of fascinating fortean information, and I am greatly indebted to him for bringing this example to my attention. It appeared in the *Blackburn Standard* on 8 June 1836 and reads as follows:

"LEOPARD HUNT –– On Monday last a strange-looking animal having been seen in the fields near Wheathamstead, Herts, a small party went in search – supposing that it was a deer which had been scared out of Brocket-hall-park by the gloomy looks of its noble occupier. Great was their surprise at finding in a hedge a large leopard, which stole away followed at a respectful distance by the sportsmen, who were only armed with fowling-pieces loaded with swan shot. As it was endeavouring to escape it met a labourer at work in the fields whom it attacked and dangerously wounded, but his life was saved by a mastiff fastening on the leopard, and enabling Mr Norman Thrale to approach within a few yards, and disable it with a discharge of swan shot. It was shortly afterwards destroyed, and was found to weigh 14 stone. It had breakfasted off a dog, whose head was found. It is not known where the beast had escaped from."

Nor, tragically, is it known what happened to the carcase of this exceedingly unexpected assailant. Was it truly a leopard – an extremely hefty one if it did weigh 14 stone (89kg) – and where indeed had it come from? Although it is commonly assumed that British ABC reports and encounters constitute a phenomenon from the last 50 years, some extremely tantalising examples pre-dating that period very considerably are also on file, to which this extraordinary case can now be added.

And if any *FT* readers hailing from the Wheathamstead area of Hertfordshire are aware of additional details, we'd love to hear from you.

Richard Muirhead, pers. comm., 23 Oct 2016; *Blackburn Standard*, 8 June 1836.

MEDICAL BAG

Washing, crying or sweating can be painful and even dangerous if you suffer from a rare water allergy – plus twin towns in China and Brazil...

AAAH! WATER!!

In the last round-up of odd allergies [**FT315:8-9**], we featured Rachel Price, who was allergic to water. She suffered from *aquagenic pruritus*, a condition thought to afflict only 35 people in the world. The cause is unknown and there is no known cure. Nikki Hurst, 48, a cake maker from Hazlemere in Buckinghamshire, also suffers from *aquagenic pruritus,* diagnosed in 2003. She has not had a shower since then and uses baby wipes to stay clean. Drinking water triggers an agonising stabbing reaction. "Simple tasks are a nightmare," she said. "I wash up in rubber gloves but if my hands get too hot, I sweat and the stabbing sensation spreads up my arms. Sometimes attacks can last eight hours and I curl up wanting to end it all." According to the report in the *Sun* (16 Nov 2015), she is the only woman in England to have her blood plasma replaced each month.

- Niah Selway, 17, a student from Hastings, East Sussex, suffers from *aquagenic urticaria* – her tears make her erupt in excruciating hives. (*Aquagenic urticaria* involves visible lesions while *aquagenic pruritus* is itching without lesions; 'urticaria' means hives while 'puritus' means itch.) Niah's symptoms began when she was five, but it was only recently that she was correctly diagnosed. She has a mild form of the illness, so is able to drink water, and can stay in the shower for five minutes before a rash develops. *Sunday Mirror, 8 Nov 2015.*

- A bath brings out Harry Floyd, four, in an itchy rash; he suffers from "physical urticaria", a skin allergy to a host of seemingly benign triggers including water and hot or cold weather. Research published recently in the *Expert Review of Clinical Immunology* suggests that at least 100,000 Britons suffer from this condition, which implies it is distinct from the very rare *aquagenic urticaria.* He now takes two doses of antihistamine a day and steroids to treat particularly bad flare-ups. Increasing numbers of patients in the UK (and elsewhere?) are presenting with hives, and the medical profession is mystified. *D.Mail, 25 Aug 2015.*

ETIENNE GILFILLAN

- Barbara Ward, 43, a mother of four from Hartlepool, could be killed by her own tears. Even washing up or bathing her children could be fatal. She can't exercise in case she breaks into a sweat, has to stay indoors when it is raining, and is limited to just two one-minute baths a week, which leave her in severe pain. Husband Michael, 46, does most of the housework and takes their children for meals out and on holiday leaving his wife at home. She was diagnosed with *aquagenic urticaria* in October 2013, when a shower sent her into severe anaphylactic shock and she had to be hospitalised. The condition is said to affect only one in 230 million people. Contact with water triggers a painful rash and wheezing, and Mrs Ward has to carry two epiPens – a life-saving adrenaline jab – and take strong antihistamines. She drinks only tea or milk, taking small sips, and has not downed a glass of water for 20 years. (Of course, tea and milk contain water, and the human body is largely water – but we're not experts.) *D.Mail, D.Express, 3 July 2014.*

A shower sent her into severe anaphlyactic shock

ALLERGIC TO – NOTHING

Bethan Kentesber, 18, of Lichfield, Staffordshire, ballooned overnight "like a beach ball". She woke up to find her face, arms and legs had swollen and spots and a rash had broken out all over her body. She rushed to hospital in Birmingham where she was given a course of steroids to reduce the inflammation. Things calmed down after a few days. It is believed she suffered from spontaneous urticaria – a condition that occurs when an allergic reaction is triggered without any reason – or without any known reason, at any rate. Just a bolt from the blue, like Sudden Adult Death Syndrome. *Metro, 12 Aug 2016.*

TWIN TOWNS

Banshang (or Fanshang), a village of 50 families in China's central Hubei province, has produced 16 sets of twins in the past 50 years – 12 times the global average, apparently – giving new meaning to the expression "twin town". Of the 16 sets of twins, nine are sisters, four are brothers and the rest are mixed. The oldest twins are aged 51 and the youngest just five. Local people believe the reason there are so many twins is that the water from the local well works as a fertility elixir. The well was located far from pollution in a "beautiful, fresh and green site" at the foot of "white rock cliffs".

Under the one-child policy of population control, which has since been relaxed to allow two children, there was widespread use of fertility treatment to encourage multiple births, because the policy applied to one birth, rather than one child, and twins or triplets or more were not penalised. In some cases, where two children were born in rapid succession, they would be registered as twins to avoid paying the fine.

In recent years, in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) and the use of fertility drugs have become popular in China and with it there has been a rise in the number of multiple births, but Banshang is still a statistical conundrum. The oldest person in the village is Shen Shuigui (81), and she says the water in

Cândido Godói
Cidade Pomar - Terra dos Gêmeos

FELIPE P / CREATIVE COMMONS

ABOVE: Cândido Godói; the town's gate proclaims it the 'Terra dos Gêmeos' (Land of Twins). **BELOW**: Josef Mengele, blamed by some for the high incidence of twins in the area.

KEYSTONE / GETTY IMAGES

the shallow well is particularly sweet, and it used to serve the whole village. According to the report, the well was sealed four years ago when a child died in it, and people had to go elsewhere for their water, and then running water was installed. In the interim, only two sets of twins have been born.

Disappointingly, however, genetics rather than 'magic water' is probably the reason for so many twins. Of the 16 sets, 15 are in some way related to the Chen family. The *Chutian* (or *Xiangcheng*) *Metropolis Daily* newspaper in Wuhan reported how some parents have had difficulty telling the identical twins apart over the years. "We used to mix the babies up and bathe one of them twice by mistake decades ago," said Chen Mingyuan, the village party secretary and father of twin daughters.

Earlier this year, a village of 4,000 people in Ukraine gained international attention as the home to 58 pairs of twins. As in Banshang, local people in Velikaya Kopanya said their drinking water was behind the phenomenon. *Irish Times, D.Telegraph, 26 April 2016.*

- Seven years ago, the Brazilian town of Cândido Godói had more than 100 sets of twins in a population of 6,700. The town's official crest shows two identical profiles and a road sign welcomes visitors to a "Farming Community and Land of the Twins". There is also a museum, the House of the Twins. From 1990 to 1994, the proportion of twin births in Linha São Pedro, a small and predominantly German settlement nearby, was 10 per cent, compared to 1.8 per cent for rest of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. In his book, *Mengele: The Angel Of Death In South America*, Argentine historian Jorge Camarasa claims that the high incidence of twins in this region is the result of genetic manipulation by the infamous Nazi doctor Josef Mengele who fled to South America, but this has been greeted with general scepticism [**FT247:4-5**].

Mythconceptions

by Mat Coward

207: RUSKIN'S WEDDING NIGHT

ILLUSTRATIONS: HUNT EMERSON

The myth

On his wedding night in 1848, art critic and general purpose Victorian man of letters John Ruskin fled in horror from his bride's bed on discovering that she had pubic hair. His only previous knowledge of naked women was from classical statuary and paintings, where the frightful creatures at least had the decency to be smooth.

The "truth"

No one can choose how posterity will remember them, of course, but it does seem unfair that the one thing everyone associates with Ruskin is this absurd story. Nobody now alive knows why the marriage between Ruskin (1819-1900) and Effie Gray (1828-97) was never consummated, and it's certain that no answer will ever be revealed by speculation, but we can say with confidence that Ruskin was aware of the existence of pubes. As Matthew Sweet, the great debunker of myths about Victorian prudery, has pointed out, Ruskin was, like most gentlemen of his generation, entirely familiar with pornographic photographs of naked women. This is known in the particular, rather than the general, because – slightly startlingly – Ruskin wrote about the subject in letters to his parents. The Hair Hypothesis seems to have originated in Mary Lutyens's 1960s biography of Ruskin, in which she suggested that, "in his ignorance", the husband believed his wife "to be uniquely disfigured". The idea that 19th century men had an almost phobic reaction to female sexuality was an element in the 20th century's view of itself – but in this specific detail, at least, it appears to be without foundation.

Sources

Inventing the Victorians by Matthew Sweet (St Martin's Press, 2001); www.theguardian.com/film/2010/mar/14/john-ruskin-wedding-effie-gray.

Disclaimer

Is this one put to bed, then, or have we only shaved the surface? If your knowledge of Ruskin's marital dysfunction is better than ours, don't be shy – tell the letters column.

Mythchaser

A reader asks "Whereabouts in the bunk-debunk-rebunk cycle do we currently locate Gavrilo Princip's Sandwich - aka, the Sandwich that Started World War One?"

DON'T MISS MYTHCONCEPTIONS THE BOOK
OUT NOW ONLINE AND IN ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS

NECROLOG

This month, the mild-mannered Scotsman who found himself chosen as the emissary of the "new Christ" joins the Ascended Masters, and a legendary Russian clown pops off.

BERNARD33 / CREATIVE COMMONS

BENJAMIN CREME

Benjamin Creme was a genial and cultivated man with a compendious knowledge of art, philosophy and classical music, and a love of cricket. He had a particular disdain for the tinkly banalities of "New Age" music, which he pronounced "newage", to rhyme with sewage. He grew up in Glasgow, the son of a Russian Jew and an Irish Catholic who dabbled in spiritualism. He left school at 16 to concentrate on painting; throughout his life he would earn a living from selling his works. Aged 14, his interest in the occult was awakened by the writings of Alexandra David-Néel, the Belgian-French explorer who had reached Lhasa when it was closed to foreigners. He claimed that through close study of her books he mastered the Tibetan yogic practice of *tumo* or inner heat.

He also studied the teachings of Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Yogananda and Sri Ramana Maharshi, but it was the writings of Madame Blavatsky and Alice Bailey that proved formative. Blavatsky claimed to be in contact with the Hierarchy of Masters, aka the Great White Brotherhood, and talked of the coming of a new world teacher named Maitreya – the fourth historical Buddha in Tibetan Buddhist cosmology. Her millenarian message was elaborated by Bailey, who in 1923 broke away from the Theosophical Society to found her own Arcane Society, and claimed to be in contact with a realised Master called "The Tibetan". She believed that the hidden Masters inhabited the mythical city of Shamballah, founded by Venusians some 18 million years ago on a site in the Gobi desert.

In 1957 Creme became a member of the Aetherius Society, a UFO-contactee group founded by the eccentric "Sir" George King who, while washing dishes one day in 1954, heard a loud voice say: "Prepare yourself! You are to become the Voice of Interplanetary Parliament." King claimed the voice came from an entity living on Venus named Aetherius. Creme became the society's vice-president, but broke with them in 1959 following a disagreement with King. That same year he claimed to have had his first telepathic communication with one of the Masters who had been in contact with Blavatsky and Bailey. This Master instructed him to pave the way for the coming of Maitreya, the "new world teacher". Little happened until 1972, when he received further messages. In 1974 he began to set up an organisation of followers; with them he learnt to transmit spiritual energy. Later that year, Maitreya himself spoke through him. In his lectures, it was not uncommon for some of his audience to report having witnessed Creme suffused in a golden glow, or to have seen the face of Maitreya superimposed on his.

In 1982 Creme took out a series of full-page ads in European and US newspapers and staged a press conference in Los Angeles proclaiming the arrival of Maitreya, who had left his abode in the Himalayas and flown from Pakistan to London, where he was working as a night porter in a hospital. There, he was preparing for the "Day of Declaration", in which he would reveal himself via global television and usher in a new age of peace and harmony. This announcement prompted an unseemly rush of reporters to the Brick Lane area of London's East End in a vain search for the "new Christ".

To facilitate his work, Creme established a magazine, *Share International*, which carried communications from his own Master and regular bulletins about Maitreya's influence on world affairs. It was published in 70 countries, and Creme travelled throughout Europe, the United States, South America and Japan addressing public meetings, as well as speaking frequently on radio. He also wrote 16 books on esoteric subjects.

In the parallel universe of millenarian enthusiasm, Creme's claims seemed to be taken equally seriously by some fundamentalist Christian organisations, which regularly attacked the mild-mannered Scotsman as an apostle of the Antichrist prophesied in the Book of Revelation, and an avatar of the dreaded spectre of "World Government". An Evangelical book, *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow* (1983), attacked all New Age and esoteric movements – especially Creme and the Maitreya – as a Satanic conspiracy; it was one of the first of several such books in which conservative Evangelicals attacked the New Age, and did much to promote the illogical belief that members of New Age movements, Neo-Paganism, Wicca and esoteric religious movements are all Satanists.

Maitreya's message (as with the Aetherius Society, the Raelian Movement and other New Age movements which claim contact with either Ascended Masters or extraterrestrials) is simple: "Share and save the world... Take your brother's need as the measure for your action and solve the problems of the world. There is no other course."

In an unusual twist on the urban legend of the vanishing hitchhiker, Creme claimed that Maitreya had hitched lifts with Evangelical Christians, told them they would shortly see Christ, then vanished from their cars. In 1988 *Share International* published a photograph of a bearded man dressed in a robe who had reportedly made a fleeting appearance at a prayer meeting in Nairobi, explaining that this was Maitreya, and that the Day of Revelation was nigh [**FT51:23**]. He was supposedly seen by 6,000 people, photographed, and reported in the *Kenya Times* and on CNN and BBC News. Since 1992, said Creme, Maitreya has appeared – and disappeared – in front of many groups of Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists "from Mexico City to Moscow, from Geneva to Johannesburg; in North Africa and the Middle East, India and Pakistan". In January 2010 Creme announced that Maitreya had appeared on a US television programme. His followers identified him as Dr Raj Patel, 37, a British-born liberal economic activist. Patel then posted a blog entitled 'Call me Brian', including a clip from the famous Monty Python film and finishing with "Sadly, I'm not the Messiah. I'm just a very naughty boy." The faithful still await the Day of Revelation.

Creme lived modestly in Tufnell Park, north London, receiving no money for his talks, and claiming that it was actually "embarrassing" to have been "chosen" as the emissary of the new Christ. Over the years, he became accustomed to ridicule and mockery, which he treated with equanimity. His first wife, Peggy, died in 1965. He is survived by his second wife, Phyllis, whom he married in 1968, by their son and daughter, and by a son of his first marriage.

Benjamin Creme, prophet of the Maitraya, born Glasgow 5 Dec 1922; died 24 Oct 2016, aged 93.

OLEG POPOV

Popov was once the best-known clown in the world, described as the Michelangelo of the circus. He started his career aged 19 as a juggler and slack-wire artist when his comic abilities were spotted just after WWII. The circus was a vital part of life in the Soviet Union. Russian circus traditions date back to the Middle Ages when wandering minstrels known as *skomorokhi* would perform juggling, acrobatics and animal acts, often interspersed with satirical sketches, the foundation of circus clownery.

Known as the "Sunshine Clown", Popov based his sawdust ring character on the *Ivanushka*, or Ivan the Fool, a stock figure of Russian folklore, a simple-minded, fair-haired, blue-eyed youth whose naïvité and lack of guile help him triumph over much smarter folk. For some six decades Popov donned his black velvet jacket, striped trousers, yellow straw wig and tatty chequered cap, appearing 10 or 12 times during a performance. Eschewing the grotesque makeup typical of Western clowns, he applied simple black lines to accentuate his mournful eyes, with lightly rouged cheeks and a bulbous red nose. When he toured France, Belgium and England with the Moscow Circus in 1956, critics hailed him as a successor to Chaplin, the *Sunday Times* reviewer observing that "only someone very shy of the word 'genius' could withhold it from Oleg Popov… As a juggler, acrobat, wire-walker, crackpot musician and classical clown Popov is the equal of anyone we are likely to see."

Oleg Konstantinovich Popov, clown, born Virubovo, Moscow Oblast 31 July 1930; died in Rostov-on-Don from a heart attack while on tour 2 Nov 2016, aged 86.

KEYSTONE / HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES

FAIRIES, FOLKLORE AND FORTEANA

SIMON YOUNG FILES A NEW REPORT FROM THE INTERFACE OF STRANGE PHENOMENA AND FOLK BELIEF

THE WOLLATON PARK GNOMES

Last month, I briefly reviewed the evidence for the Wollaton Park Gnomes (**FT31:42, 200:34, 321:43-45, 348:23**). Readers will remember that this was an extraordinary encounter in 1979, between – there is no easy way to say this – some children and several score 'gnomes' in mini-cars in a recreational area in Nottingham. I noted that there had been, at one time, a tape recording of a headmaster interviewing three of the children, but that "this recording no longer exists – at least I don't think it does…"

I now know that at least one copy of the tape has survived. The owner of the tape – who wishes to remain anonymous but who is trustworthy – kindly typed out a transcript. I have, then, now read the words of three of the children who ran into the 'gnomes' that evening in late September 1979. I have also placed it on my academia.edu site as a pdf, where it is freely available for anyone interested in forteana or folklore.

Reading the account we can clear up several inconsistencies from different published versions. For instance, it is often claimed that there were just three children. This is wrong. There were six or seven and, given the vagueness of the witnesses on this point, there may have been more. It is also claimed that this was a one-off happening. Yet one interviewee suggested that the children had already met the 'gnomes'. There is also some remarkable stuff about the 'gnomes' living in holes in the tops of trees! Did they have tree garages too for their little cars?

One child described the creatures as being "similar to a dwarf"; the other children, meanwhile, described them as "gnomes, summat like that" and "gnomes or summat". What did 'gnomes' mean to an eight-year-old in the late 1970s? My guess is that gnomes were, above all, things that you bought in garden centres, though I expect to be corrected. I looked, incidentally, at Enid Blyton's Faraway Tree series, which has magical creatures living in holes at the top of trees, but there were no gnomes there.

A more general point comes from a comparison of the three interviews. In situations like this we want consistency, but not too much. The three children give, for example, the same events in the same order. It would be unsettling if they were inconsistent in that respect. Their descriptions of the 'gnomes' were also similar: with just changes in colour. However, on a couple of issues there was a little too much agreement.

Most notably, each of the three children said that there were 30 cars with 60 gnomes (two gnomes per car), giving these exact numbers. This is surprisingly precise, given that the cars were racing around and the children were being chased! Most probably the children had talked among themselves, recounting their experiences and these numbers emerged and were tacitly agreed upon. Psychologists call this 'secondary elaboration': an event is ordered and changed as it is recounted.

Of course, there are different kinds of secondary elaboration. Imagine a close-knit family of five seeing, say, a UFO. They talk about the happening afterwards (telling neighbours etc) and are then interviewed a year later by a local UFO group. Imagine now, instead, five strangers in a diner, seeing the same UFO, going home and then, also, being interviewed a year later. The interviewers will, of course, find a much more consistent account from the family than from the witnesses from the diner.

Each individual from the diner will also have been through secondary elaboration. They will remember and re-elaborate what they saw on their own and in talking to their friends and acquaintances. But the family will share their impressions again and again among themselves. Inconsistencies and unimportant data will have been sanded away in repeated tellings.

The Wollaton children seem to have already, in the days before meeting the headmaster, settled on a common version of their experience. I can still remember, from 40 years ago, intense playground talks establishing unimpeachable truths about local bogeymen, creepy neighbours and school punishments. If my memories serve me correctly, children aged between six and 10 are the most close-knit family imaginable. As the Wollaton witnesses chatted to each other and, just as importantly, as they boasted to other schoolmates about their adventures, they established an agreed version of what had happened to them.

Now the transcript has emerged, what else can we do to get to the bottom of the Wollaton Park gnomes? One very useful thing would be to track down all contemporary newspaper accounts. Several children were interviewed on several occasions and remarkable comments emerge: e.g. "We heard that if you don't tell [the gnomes] where you live, they take you to their houses and keep you". Of course, the most important step would be to talk to the grown children, now in their 40s. Can anyone help here? Witnesses, are you out there? Anonymity guaranteed.

Simon Young writes on folklore and history and runs www.fairyist.com

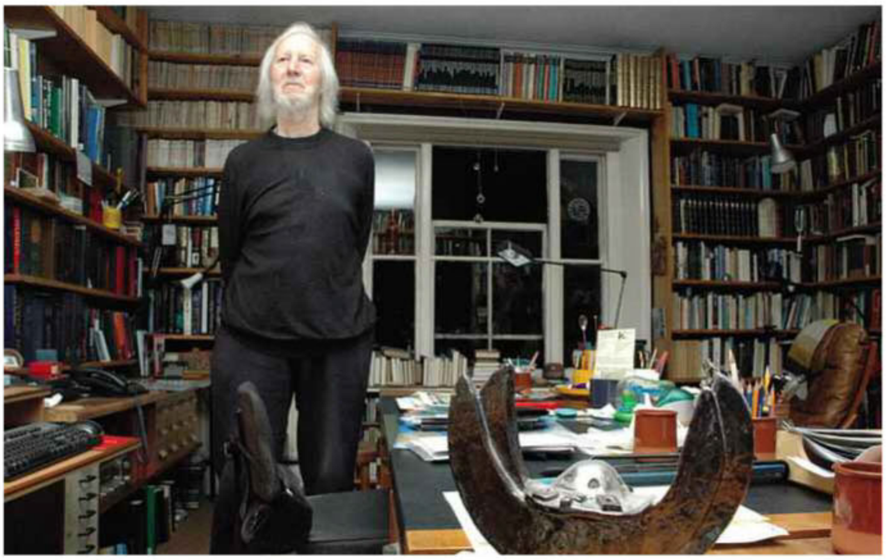
the UFO files

FORTEAN TIMES presents our monthly section featuring regular sighting reports, reviews of classic cases, entries on major ufological topics and hands-on advice for UFO investigators. **The UFO Files** will benefit from your input, so don't hesitate to submit your suggestions and questions.

To contact **The UFO Files**, email: **nufon@btinternet.com**

FLYING SORCERY

PETER BROOKESMITH PRESENTS HIS REGULAR SURVEY OF THE LATEST FADS AND FLAPS FROM THE WORLD OF UFOLOGY



CLAS SVAHN

VELVET GLOVES, IRON MAN

Reading the description of Hilary Evans's two most seminal books in 'Building a Fortean Library' in last month's issue, I had two reactions. First, the thought that another reader might have written a quite different if equally laudatory account of them, so subtle are they (and some might even say devious) and so wide-ranging. My second was to do with Hilary the man. Fastidiously even-handed and rigorously diplomatic in his writings and presentations, he nonetheless had no lack of conviction about certain fortean subjects, notably his disdain, bordering on contempt – though that was always well concealed in public – for the alien-abduction industry. One well remembers his opening to a talk at an FT UnConvention: "I am here to tell you what Budd Hopkins won't" – Hopkins having just left the stage.

Hilary's trick was to offer his thoughts in such a mild, even hesitant, tone that no one could take offence, while liberally seasoning his bland reasonableness with all manner of subversive notions. The result, he once rather wryly told me, was that believers tended to think of him as a sceptic, and sceptics as a believer. This was entirely in keeping with his somewhat misleading persona. He appeared, on first acquaintance, to be more than somewhat effete, not to say limp-wristed, in his beatnik's polo necks and sometimes questionable footwear. Add to that his fluting voice, cut-glass English accent and tentative speech, his delicate body language, long hair and unruly beard, general air of unworldliness, and a lack of any obvious muscularity, and you might have been fooled into thinking he was thoroughly away with the fairies. Of course you'd be wrong.

This was a man who had jived with Ottilie Patterson. He had also spent his National Service as a policeman in Palestine, not exactly a laid-back job in the period when Israel established its independence, and he was discharged with a commendation for exemplary conduct. As a committed Zionist I wish I had known of this before reading his obituaries, for the insights he might have offered (not to mention sheer nosiness as to what he'd actually done), but it was typical of the man not to mention it even when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982. Perhaps his experiences there led him to his unconfrontational and studiously impartial style. It's still difficult to imagine the teenage Hilary in battledress, square-bashing with a No 4 Lee Enfield, but he must have done it. Not so limp-wristed after all, then.

Given the opportunity, or provocation, he could actually be quite waspish, and in unexpected ways. He gave every impression of being the liberal English gentleman of a generally egalitarian outlook and opinions on most things that would have offended no one at the *Guardian* or the BBC. Then came the day I hauled him off to Simpson's-in-the-Strand for lunch, thanks as ever to Orbis Publishing's generous approach to hospitality. He materialised in reception wearing not his habitual polo neck but a navy-blue Aertex shirt, to my surprise, but also relief. I had a suspicion Simpson's had an old-fashioned dress code. Sure enough, when we rolled up a minion respectfully insisted he adorn himself with a tie, courtesy of the house, but which had clearly never been within a mile of a silkworm in all its life. Hilary accepted the imposition with good if reluctant grace.

Discussing 'business' with a writer on the paranormal can lead to long and rambling exchanges, and in due course we found we were the only customers left in the oak-panelled chamber. Eventually an inappropriately unembarrassed waiter arrived to ask us more or less politely to leave. As it was about half past three in the afternoon I took his point, but the 'less' part of the politely did grate a bit. I decided Simpson's could stand another five minutes while we emptied coffee cups and brandy glasses. Once the flunkey was out of earshot, Hilary snarled: "Who *do* these people think they are? They're only servants, after all." That was a bit of a revelation: Hilary as harrumphing squire.

The only other outburst I witnessed occurred after the symposium at Indian Head in 2000, which resulted in what I immodestly believe is still the best all-round view of the Betty and Barney Hill 'abduction', *Encounters at Indian Head*. We were both flying from Boston, me to Montpellier, him to London, within a couple of hours of each other, so I gave him a lift to the airport. We nattered about this and that and fell into our own reveries, as one does trundling along the Interstate. Just as we crossed the border from New Hampshire into Massachusetts, without warning he exploded: "Nation of children!" Perhaps some particularly jejune billboard had set him off, or maybe he'd been pondering some bit of our (actually highly collegiate, sometimes *too* courteous) discussions over the weekend. I forget what I answered – probably some platitude, like "It's still a young country." On being told about it, Karl Pflock cackled, and said: "I know what he means, though."

It's always interesting to see these small, hidden, unexpected sides of people you think you know well (even if occasionally they become large, overt, and end in tears). Hilary was always tougher than he chose to seem.

JENNY RANDLES ARGUES THAT UFOs HAVE ALWAYS EXISTED ON THE BORDER BETWEEN FACT AND FICTION

SAUCERS OF IMAGINATION

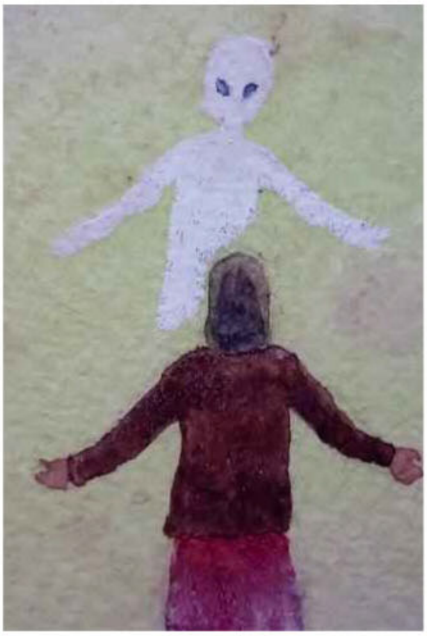
When I was little, well before I got involved in UFO research, I wrote a short story called 'Sleep Can Take You Far Away'. It proved deeply significant because my schoolteacher read it, spoke to my parents in concern and transformed my life. As a tale it was immature and odd, though I can see how it influenced my ideas on UFOs. I did write a few more peculiar things with titles like 'A Tale of two Settees' that featured in science fiction magazines, but storytelling is not my forte (though my long term co-writer Peter Hough these days publishes paranormal horror tales, and a new UFO novel by a UK ufologist was being promoted on Facebook even as I was writing this column). In the 1990s, though, I did write a novel about the UFO mystery that I let a few friends read. Roy Sandbach illustrated *Don't Step in the Dark* for me with paintings, but I was not trying to publish it; it was just an imaginative exercise to pose questions to explore further in real life.

On another occasion, a bestselling fiction author contacted me as they were considering a thriller about the UFO subject and, as they did not know the field, wanted my help. I certainly considered that partnership but knew it was going to be a military conspiracy/alien invasion/cover-up yarn, as that was what the publisher believed would sell. It wasn't the kind of UFO novel that I felt reflected what was really going on, so demurred.

In part, this doubt was based on my past experience of the uneasy relationship between imagination and reality in ufology that I touched on a little last month. Non-fiction and fiction each have their own target audience and expectations, and these co-exist uneasily. It is also not hard to imagine how any high-profile work of fiction influences public perception of the real phenomenon on which they assume it to be based. Without intending to, a novelist can lead the world up the garden path and into La La Land. Moreover, UFO-related novels have at times seemed to create their own reality as a wake behind them whilst cutting through the sea of global consciousness.

Whitley Strieber, an excellent horror novelist, had his own real life encounters with something weird and penned that adventure in his non-fiction book *Communion*. It was assuredly not a novel as some misjudged. Instead, it endeavoured to be honest about what he had experienced; but inevitably Strieber's expert, novelistic prose made it more influential on the world than the more pedestrian UFO account of, say, a policeman or a businesswoman.

Strieber just wanted to understand what happened in his life, but when the book was turned into a movie, blurring the lines between fact and fiction even further, the story's power increased. As a result, the effects on our culture of this real close encounter were amplified. Its impact caused major ripples in the collective unconscious: far more, I suspect, than countless prior UFO books playing to a captive audience of forteans. We overlook the power of great storytelling at our peril – even when the story being told is a true one.



ABOVE: One of Roy Sandbach's paintings for the author's unpublished novel *Don't Step in the Dark*.

ROY SANDBACH

The face of the entities Strieber met featured on the brilliant promotional posters that popped up everywhere, burrowing deep into the nooks and crannies of the human soul as no UFO case had done before. And we saw them resurface in later 'real' sightings and reports from witnesses. The same entities, the same nuances and details, such as a smell like cinnamon, began to accumulate.

Such inter-case confirmation might allow ufology to argue for a shared underlying reality; but this pattern could also come from elsewhere. If UFO cases that have a major impact on human consciousness cause ripples that eventually reach a distant shore, we cannot presume that this apparent affirmation endorses the physical reality of anything – no matter how real the impact, it may have a less tangible genesis. Throughout UFO history we see evidence of recurring memes that suggest an objective reality – until you consider that they might instead be echoes passing through the human species from consciousness to consciousness via a process of cultural osmosis.

It is not hard to prove this. Indeed the very essence of our mystery – the shape of the flying saucer – owes as much to a misreported phrase that ricocheted through human consciousness as it does to what was actually observed. In 1947, Kenneth Arnold saw crescent-like craft that he assumed were military aircraft. He described their motion through the air as like saucers skipping across water – in the way that we might bounce a flat stone on a pond. He clearly referred to their *motion*, not their *shape*. But the press guessed otherwise and chose the name 'flying saucer', creating an image that stuck, dominating movies, comics and TV shows for decades. To this day, the image is embedded in the collective consciousness as what a UFO looks like.

But what If Arnold had chosen different words in that first hasty interview and said it was like "a small pebble" bouncing across water? Perhaps in some parallel universe people watch endless movies about aliens invading Earth in their 'bouncing pebbles' and nobody has ever heard of our accidental 'flying saucers'.

The problem is exacerbated by the indeterminate status of some cases. I know of several books that have been written as 'true' accounts that are, shall we say, of doubtful provenance; I can't name any, as they were all published as 'true' by their authors, and most often these writers *did* believe that to be the case. This confusion of provenance is all the more fascinating in that in many respects the lack of actual reality of any such story is not that important: the impact on our perception of the UFO mystery will be much the same, whether from genuinely recounted events, like those in *Communion*, or from powerfully imagined 'novels', or exaggerated real-life accounts that readers and writers believe to be true.

Over the years, many UFO researchers have straddled that boundary between fact and fiction – sometimes intentionally, sometimes by accident. The stories of the great early UFO writer John Keel are rich and colourful and were published as true and do have at least some basis in truth. But when his *Mothman Prophecies* became a movie in 2002 most reviewers, unfamiliar with his style or the quirkiness of UFOs in general, seemed unsure of how seriously to take the 'based on a true story' motif in the publicity hype. Readers of *Fortean Times* have less trouble accepting the malleable nature of reality and treating truth and fiction as twin impressions of something sniggering in between – but then we are used to seeing the world resemble an optical illusion formed inside the human mind. For most people, it is hard to shake the idea that the floor that they are standing on is 'really' just a less tangible field of energy.

Illusions are powerful, persistent and persuasive. Perceptions dictate beliefs, though these beliefs do not always describe fundamental reality.

Those who write novels about UFOs are in many respects forging the mystery just as much as those who are witnessing or documenting it. A novel about this subject is never really *just* a novel. It can so easily be the start of the next stage in the subject. British science fiction writer Ian Watson wrote one of the best ever UFO novels, *Miracle Visitors*, which truly understood the fluid nature of UFO reality and the part we play in its creation. He was rewarded for these insights by finding himself in the midst of an active UFO window in rural middle England just as he brought his creation to the world. It was poetically fortean. As Watson discovered, and as I feel we all must appreciate, in many ways we are not chance observers of a UFO phenomenon – we are very much its architects.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST

FORTEAN TIMES BRINGS YOU THE NEWS THAT TIME FORGOT

65

TALES OF SPONTANEOUS HUMAN LEVITATION

THEO PAIJMANS finds that instances of involuntary levitation are widespread, particiularly among children

It is March 1850 and business at the home of Reverend Dr Phelps on Elm Street in Stratford, Connecticut, is anything but usual. A malignant poltergeist has turned its unwelcome attentions to the household. One day, his 12-year-old son Harry was passing through the dining room when he "thought himself suddenly caught up by some unseen power from the floor, and supposed he was carried off through the ceiling".[1]

Levitation accounts such as this have been widely reported since ancient times. More recent ones are found in cases such as the Enfield poltergeist, but nowadays, it is claimed, they are rare.[2] There are also tales of sudden, involuntary levitation. Old lumberjack Pat Murphy recalled his experience many years later. In the 1860s, he was living at a lumber camp in Upper Ottawa: "I was lying on two planks stretched across trestles. Suddenly, about two o'clock in the morning, I felt myself being wafted heavenward. Then the planks came down on the trestles with a bang. This performance was repeated three times, after which I skinned out of the place as fast as my legs would carry me. If anyone had been playing tricks on me I would have seen him, because there was a candle burning in the room." [3]

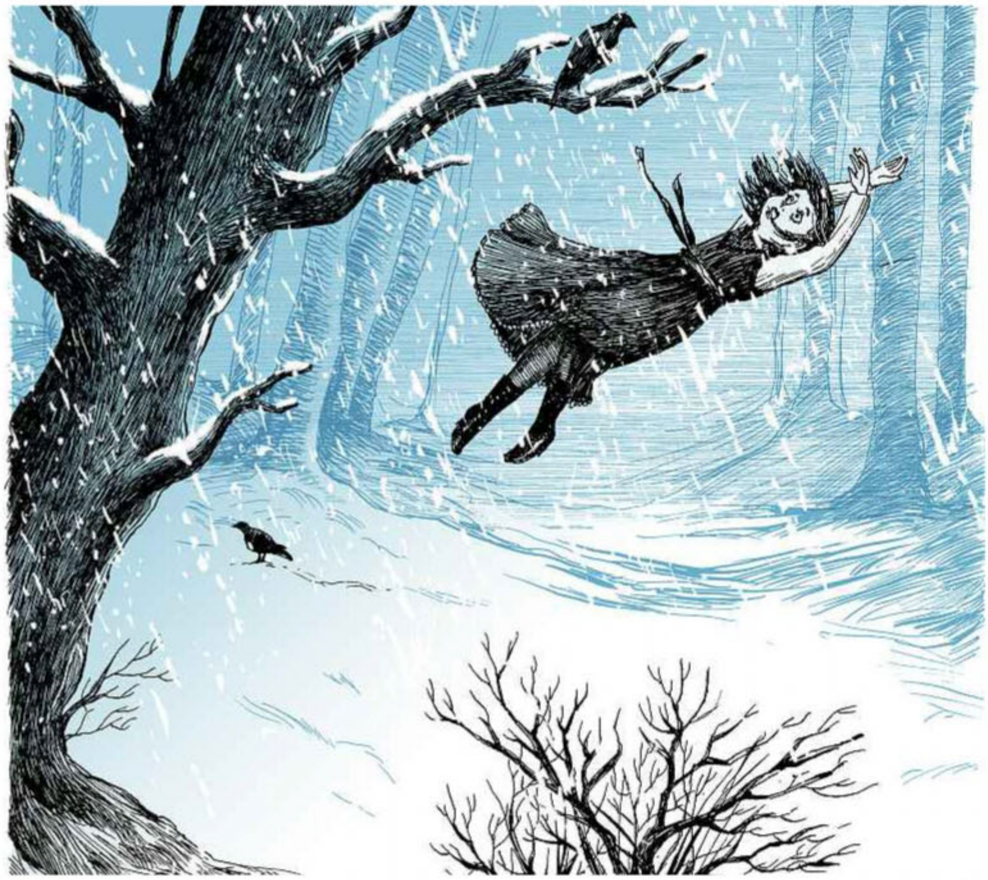
On 1 September 1861 spontaneous levitations were witnessed during a sermon at the Mariasteigenkirche in the Austrian capital of Vienna: "At the beginning of the sermon a devout lady… was in an ecstatic mood. The more profoundly the preacher pronounced words of eternal life, the more heartfelt and apparently spiritual her condition became; her hands at first were folded over her chest, then her arms were outstretched as she was apparently entirely transported off the ground – floating about one foot high – her face full of endless friendliness, lips softly moving in prayer, eyes without moving directed at the preacher…" As the sermon ended, the young woman floated back to the ground and quietly left the church. A few days earlier the woman had been in a similar exalted state; eyewitnesses reported that when Holy Communion commenced she began to levitate while kneeling at the rail.[4]

In January 1910 the French farmers of New Zealand, a small settlement at the eastern end of Prince Edward Island, were in a state of nervous excitement. They believed that a 20-year-old woman named Chinene was possessed by the Devil. The young woman had been keeping house for her brothers, also farmers in that community. One brother had announced a few months previously that he intended to marry a woman in the neighbourhood. This did not sit well with Chinene, the accounts claimed, and she declared in a fit of rage that, "she would as soon have a devil in the family as a girl". The next night the household was aroused by loud cries, which seemed to come from all parts of the house. "Then the voice of the girl, shrieking in agony, was heard from her room. The brother, fearing his sister was being murdered, rushed to the girl's room, followed by other members of the family. When they opened the door, they saw the young woman floating in the air, several feet above her bed, they declared. She was talking incoherently and in a language much different from that used by her in ordinary conversation". The woman sank back on her bed and fell into a deep sleep. The next morning she had no recollection of the occurrences the night before, but "night after night the same performance was repeated". A doctor and a priest were summoned but were unable to resolve the issue. All the priest could do to quell the fear was to forbid further visitors to the house.[5]

Chinene also became clairvoyant: "In what seemed like a hypnotic trance [she] told her visitors how much money they had with them. She was also able to repeat the addresses and contents of letters in their pockets." A Dr Peter Conroy from the hospital at nearby Charlottetown was summoned for consultation. He arrived at a different conclusion. Nothing had happened which could not be explained by science, Conroy declared. In his opinion Chinene was "an auto-hypnotist with obsessive influences". The levitations were caused by "involuntary hypnotism" he argued. "Miss Chinene creates delusions in the minds of those around her."[6] Those who were not convinced asked for an investigation by someone versed in "psychology and the occult sciences".[7] Another had more faith in exorcism.[8] Since her health had deteriorated and efforts to cure her were unsuccessful, she was transported to the Falconer Hospital for the insane in Charlottetown. Perhaps this was the best thing for her own safety, as the farmers had begun to attribute all kinds of mishap to her, including three fires that had destroyed barns, one of which belonged to her uncle.

The notion of floating or levitation is predominantly found among children, a 1930 survey by the Washington Child Research Center concluded. "Did you ever fly? Most persons have dreamed of flying or floating, and a few, when they were small children, have had the actual waking sensation of flying so intensely that they still find it hard to convince themselves it was a hallucination," newspapers summarised. [9] The inquiry uncovered that it was the most common of all hallucinations amongst children, but "it is so radical a departure from ordinary experience that it remains in the memory for years". Dr Mandel Sherman, the director of the centre, also found that studying these episodes was very difficult, since "the children do not talk about them readily and older persons do not recall them without special reminders. Even then they are likely to be ashamed of them."

The results of the inquiry, published as anonymous accounts, make for fascinating reading. One of the 30 respondents who had filled in the questionnaire, remembered how she had experienced a sensation of floating after seeing buzzards sail through the sky: "Their flight looked so easy and seemed so delightful that I would wish for 'buzzard clothes' as I called them. I would pretend to put on my 'buzzard clothes', splay my arms, and would have the sensation of sailing through space. I usually used this method of going up and down steps, although I could and did do the same thing on a flat surface." Another woman recalled how as a little girl she used to stand at the top of a closed staircase in her grandmother's house and sing. "When I sang it seemed as if I floated down. It never happened when I was not singing. The experience was so vivid that now, although I know it was an hallucination, I can't convince myself that I didn't actually float." A Washington scientist wrote: "The single levitation experience I can remember distinctly was when



CAPUCINE DESLOUIS

> “I sometimes had the sensation of of flying when I was out in a snowstorm. I would seem to be floating along with the wind-blown snow, my feet not touching the surface.”

I ran away from home, a small boy of 12, descending from the town in the mountains to the valley. I could look up and see the town above me. I had the sensation that I and the world were parts of each other, that I was absorbed into nature. I walked, walked and walked with no sensation of walking. My feet did not seem to touch the ground. I have never had the same experience since although I have approached it in moments of emotional exaltation.” Another person told how as a child, between five and eight years old: “I glided up or down the steps without touching a stair all the way… I actually believed it, for I remember telling my sister about it and how glorious it was. It was a wonderful sensation to float this way. It usually occurred in the evening.” A woman described floating sensations: “When I was a child in the country, whenever I climbed a ladder or tree it seemed as if I would float down, rather than climb down. The sensation was so marked some times that when I think back upon it I could not actually swear to this day that I did not ‘float down’ sometimes. I can’t recall the actual experience of climbing down. It seems as if I got down by floating.” Another woman remembered something from her childhood, when she was living in northern New York: “I sometimes had the sensation of flying when I was out in a snowstorm. I would seem to be floating along with the wind-blown snow, my feet not touching the surface. It was like being a part of the snow.” A man told of an experience akin to teleportation and sensations of levitation which he still felt, from time to time: “Aside from flying dreams, which are so vivid as to constitute a striking part of my life, I have occasionally had the sensation of flying when I was awake. When I was a little boy I was sent through a snowstorm about two miles to get a doctor for my little brother. It was hard going and I thought: ‘If I could only fly.’ Almost immediately, it seemed, I was at the doctor’s house. I still have a vague memory of seeming to float through the snow, certainly of moving without conscious effort.

“Sometimes, when I am tired, I sit in my chair and close my eyes. My body seems to rise and float, so much so that I hover above familiar scenes. I may be dozing, but I can’t detect the transition point between dozing and wakefulness. I fear to open my eyes lest I fall. I am conscious of being awake.” Another person’s experience sounds akin to descriptions of ‘astral travel’: “I used often both to dream and imagine that I was a sort of spirit – that I could not be seen by others, yet I could see others perfectly. Very often I would take ‘flying trips’ over the city and then I was able to see and know all that was going on. Yet I was aware those people I saw could not see me. I remember once, when I was eight years old, I tried to convince myself that I really could fly. Standing on tiptoes on the top of the steps I took a hopeful plunge. The rest you can imagine. I went in crying with my nose and knees bleeding.” Another woman confided that she too had believed strongly in her ability to fly, with dire consequences: “When I was a little girl, seven or eight years old, I was taken to see Maude Adams in *Peter Pan*. For a long time afterward I used to think I could fly. I and another little girl used to stand on a graveyard wall, five or six ft high, close our eyes and fall forward. I had a real floating sensation… as if I actually would float three or four feet without effort. We would fall on our faces. The sensation still seems real. It was so real at the time that I kept it up until I broke my ankle.”[10]

NOTES

1 EW Capron, *Modern Spiritualism – Its Facts and Fanaticisms, Its Consistencies and Contradictions*, 1855, p146.

2 J Gordon Melton, ed, *The Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology,* Fourth Edition, Gale, 1996, Vol 1, pp749-758.

3 ‘Pat Murphy Has Weird Experience’, *Canada Citizen*, Ottawa, 15 Aug 1935.

4 *Fremden-Blatt*, Vienna, Austria, 3 Sept 1861; *Klagenfurter Zeitung*, Klagenfurt, Austria, 6 Sept 1861; *Teplitz-Schönauer Anzeiger*, Teplitz-Schönau, Austria, 6 Sept 1861; *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, Innsbruck, Austria, 7 Sept 1861. The alleged incident was lampooned in the humorous Viennese weekly *Figaro*, 7 Sept 1861.

5 ‘Believe Girl Is Possessed Of Devil,’ *Mount Carmel Item*, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania, 31 Jan 1910. The incident was widely reported. I have counted 18 clippings so far.

6 ‘French Girl Floating In Air Alarms New Zealand Farmers’, *Detroit Free Press*, 31 Jan 1910.

7 ‘Possessed Of A Devil’, *The Pittsburgh Press*, Pennsylvania, 17 Mar 1910.

8 *The Washington Post*, Washington, DC, 20 Feb 1910.

9 Thomas R Henry, ‘Hallucination Of Flying Is Studied By Scientists’, *Evening Star*, Washington, DC, 7 Mar 1930; Thomas R Henry, ‘Scientists Seeking Reasons For Flying Dreams Of Youth’, *Charlotte Observer*, Charlotte, North Carolina, 16 Mar 1930; ‘Many Who never Flew Have Had the Sensation Of Flying’, *Kansas City Star*, Kansas City, Missouri, 16 Mar, 1930; ‘Flight sensation Found To Persist In Many Children’, *Times-Picayune*, New Orleans, Louisiana, 30 Mar 1930.

10 Ibid.

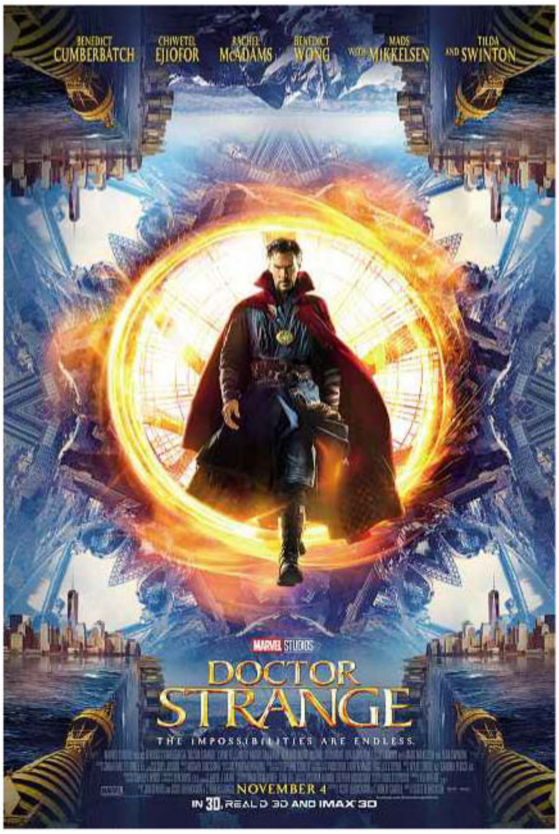
CONJURING ASIA

Marvel's Doctor Strange is just the latest in a long line of seekers after truth who have headed to the Mystic East in search of spiritual enlightenment and supernatural powers. **CHRIS GOTO-JONES** recalls the Western magicians who transformed themselves into turban-sporting seers, and examines the continuing appeal of Orientalism's magical myth.

After the car crash that leaves his hands shattered and ruined, Doctor Stephen Strange exhausts the possibilities of modern science in an attempt to repair the damage and cure his injuries. He endures all kinds of painful surgeries and experimental procedures; he spends his entire fortune. Driven by desperation and perhaps by providence, this paragon of scientific accomplishment – the brain surgeon – finally makes his way into the mysterious mountains of Nepal and Tibet. In the remote and exotic vastness of the Himalayas, Doctor Strange finally encounters an old master of wisdom, hidden away in an ancient, forgotten, and virtually inaccessible monastery.

The doctor struggles to let go of his hard-won and deeply embedded scientific scepticism, even when confronted by the evidence of Oriental magic that flows from the fingers of the ancient master – the sorcerer supreme. Being far away from New York and London, the monastery is apparently also far away from the conventions and laws of modern science. It is both in the world we know and beyond it. We can get there on a plane, but the real journey is a spiritual not a geographical one.

In the end, it is Strange's desperation, suffering, and courage that break him free from his overly-rational Western mind, liberating him into an apprenticeship in Eastern mysticism that ultimately helps him to overcome his injuries but also transposes him into a bigger, more complex, more magical world. When Stephen Strange returns to New York, he finds it transformed by his new knowledge – the city is recognisable, but it is also profoundly different; it is interlaced with magic that only the initiated can see.



STRANGE STRUGGLES TO LET GO OF HIS SCIENTIFIC SCEPTICISM

It was difficult to believe that I was on a ship, but the magnificent Queen Mary 2 had left Southampton a few days ago, heading for the promise of New York. Meanwhile, the Sun set behind my glass, making the whiskey glow like liquid gold and transforming the condensation into cascades of diamonds. I sat back into my chair and admired the magic of the moment, fiddling absentmindedly with a deck of cards. Outside the giant windows of the ship, the prow cut through the waves and the Sun touched into the Atlantic, pouring blood out into the ocean.

I cut the deck in one hand and then flipped the packet from beneath with my index finger, making it spin on an axis before landing back in the palm of my hand. It's a simple routine, but it's a good way to get a sense of the cards, and there's something strangely satisfying about flipping 52 cards as though they're one object.

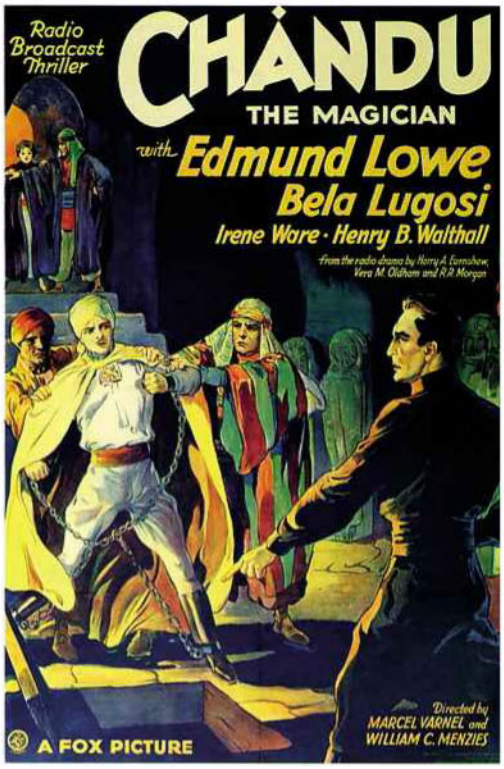
There's a faint gasp from one of the other tables in the Commodore Club. Turning, I realise that I'm being watched. A young couple are sitting watching the sunset, sipping from martini glasses, while their son stares at me. The mother grins gently, clearly caught somewhere between embarrassment and excitement, while her son points shamelessly. The father, bedecked in a very serious navy-blue sports-jacket with polished brass buttons, pretends to be gazing into the reddening horizon. After I smile an acknowledgement and turn back to my cards, I can see him watching out the corner of his eye.

"Mister?" The boy has affected his escape and now stands, tapping at my shoulder. "Mister, are you a Jedi?"

CLOAKS AND TURBANS

The premise of Marvel's *Doctor Strange*, who emerged in July 1963 (in *Strange Tales* #110) just ahead of the counter-cultural

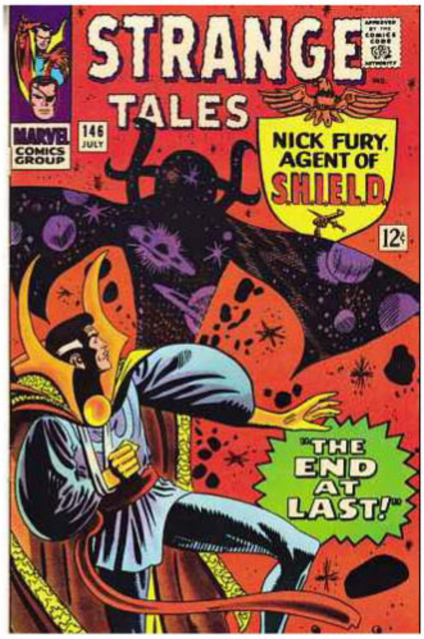
ALEXANDER: 'MENTAL MYSTICS PANEL' CIRCA 1915 COURTESY OF NIELSEN MAGIC COLLECTION


Radio Broadcast Thriller
CHANDU
THE MAGICIAN
with Edmund Lowe
Bela Lugosi
Irene Ware · Henry B. Walthall
From the radio drama by Harry A. Earnshaw, Vera M. Oldham and R.R. Morgan
Directed by MARCEL VARNEL and WILLIAM C. MENZIES
A FOX PICTURE

SOL LESSER Presents
BELA LUGOSI
THE RETURN OF
CHANDU
(THE MAGICIAN)
EPISODE No. 6
CHANDU'S FALSE STEP
Distributed by PRINCIPAL DISTRIBUTING CORP.

LEFT: 1932's *Chandu the Magician* starred Edmund Lowe as the hero and Bela Lugosi as the villainous Roxor. **ABOVE:** In 1934, Lugosi took over as Chandu in the 12-part serial *The Return of Chandu*. **BELOW:** The final instalment of Lee and Ditko's seminal Doctor Strange series appeared in *Strange Tales* #146 (July 1966); it was the first time the Master of the Mystic Arts had the cover to himself.

fascination with Eastern mysticism, perfectly captures many of modernity's conceits about the relationship between the so-called 'East' and magic. The concepts retain their contagion and attractiveness today, with the release of the blockbuster movie of the same name. However, Stan Lee and Steve Ditko tapped into a rich cultural vein when they saw the potential of this now-classic character. Indeed, Strange did not emerge from a cloudless sky; Lee was inspired by a 1930s radio drama, *Chandu the Magician* (1932-1950), which featured an American hero who had learned supernatural powers from a yogi in India, whereupon he took on the name Chandu and started fighting evil wherever it arose. The radio drama spawned a series of movies starring Edmund Lowe and Bela Lugosi. Like Doctor Strange, Chandu's privileged access to the magic of the Orient gave him such powers as teleportation, astral projection, and the ability to conjure illusions or objects from the air. He seemed to live in the same world as everyone else, but was able to see and manipulate truths about that world that citizens of modernity were conditioned to overlook, ignore, ridicule, or fear. This kind of access to a super-scientific worldview was enabled by a transformative encounter with the Orient.


STRANGE TALES
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
146 JULY
NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D.
12¢
THE END AT LAST!

CHANDU WAS AN AMERICAN HERO WHO LEARNED SUPERNATURAL POWERS FROM A YOGI IN INDIA

While the colourful robes of Doctor Strange might suggest the luxurious silks and capes of a romantic Oriental, one of the most striking features of Chandu was his famous turban, which both symbolised his mysterious connection with India and seemed to promote his magical powers. In a fascinating twist, the decade before the appearance of Chandu saw the emergence of Alexander the Crystal Seer (aka Claude Alexander Conlin, 1880-1954) as one of the most sought after and well paid magicians on the American stage. Building on a vibrant Victorian tradition of 'Oriental Magic' in the Western theatre, Alexander appeared in a turban, which represented his claims to Oriental mystique and grounded his act in ideas about the magic of India, but which also enhanced his magical powers (in unexpected ways that we'll discuss shortly). The public imagery of Chandu in the 1930s clearly echoed the earlier æsthetics of Alexander, whose beautiful chromolithograph posters featuring his turbaned head are almost as striking and famous as his act.

So there is a sense in which Doctor Strange is Alexander. However, there's also a sense in which Alexander was much stranger and more interesting than Stephen Strange, and not only because he was a real historical figure.

I have to confess that nobody had ever asked me whether I was a Jedi before, and the question intrigued me. "Why do you ask that?"

"Because you can do magic!"

"Alex! Don't bother the man. Come here!" His mother summons him back, but she looks a little uncommitted. Even as Alex just starts to pout and begin his protestations about fairness and boredom and how he's sure that I don't mind, his mother is already wandering over to my table. "I'm terribly sorry…"

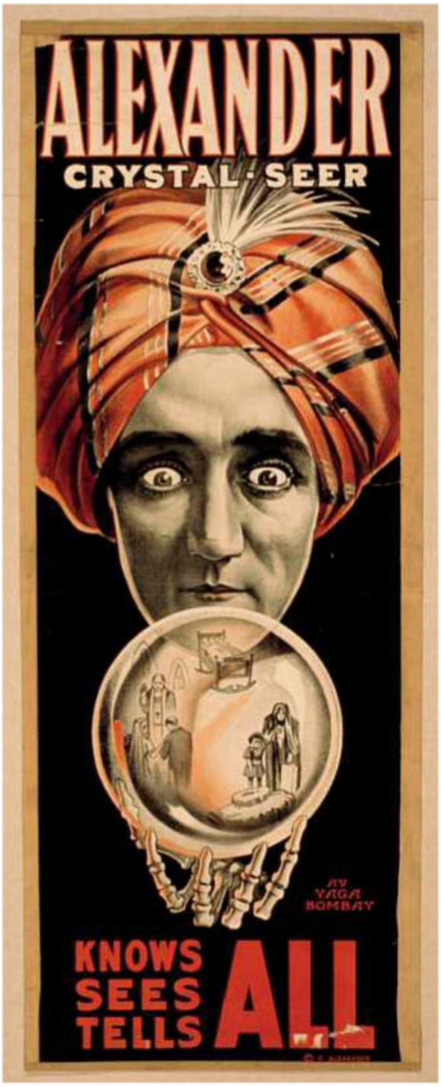
"It's really not a problem. He's just curious."

"He's a Jedi!" interjects Alex enthusiastically. "He can do magic!"

I invite them to sit and show them some simple card tricks, wondering whether Alex really believes that the Jedi use the Force to make playing cards change colour, rise out of the deck by themselves, or appear inside *empty Cola bottles. The trick they like the most is actually the simplest of all: Alex takes a card, holds it tightly to his chest, and I look into his eyes for a moment of intense concentration before naming his card. It's a throwaway rather than a finale.*

"See!" gasps Alex excitedly. "See! He read my mind! He IS a Jedi!"

MIKE CAVENEY'S EGYPTIAN HALL MUSEUM



ABOVE: Claude Alexander Conlin in the colourful costume of the an Oriental sorcerer. **LEFT:** A beautiful poster showing Alexander the turbanned seer looking into his crystal ball, circa 1910.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

THE MAN WHO KNOWS

By any standards, even the fictional ones of Marvel Comics, Claude Alexander Conlin lived an eventful and remarkable life. Although the accounts vary, and his own accounts of his experiences are almost completely inconsistent, it seems at least plausibly clear that Claude lived a creative, passionate, and deceit-laden life, spending spells in jail, marrying perhaps 14 women (sometimes more than one at a time), running confidence tricks, and stunning the American public with his stage persona, *Alexander the Crystal Seer*, or *Alexander the Man Who Knows*.

As Alexander, Claude became a baffling and ambiguous icon of mentalism, telepathy, and psychic reading. At the height of his fame in the 1920s, Alexander would appear on stage enwrapped in dramatic representations of 'Oriental' robes, resplendent in a great turban. He would explain to his audience that he had mastered the yogic magic of Indian gurus and fakirs, and then would proceed to answer any questions that audience members had submitted in secret, sealed envelopes. He was *The Man Who Knows*.

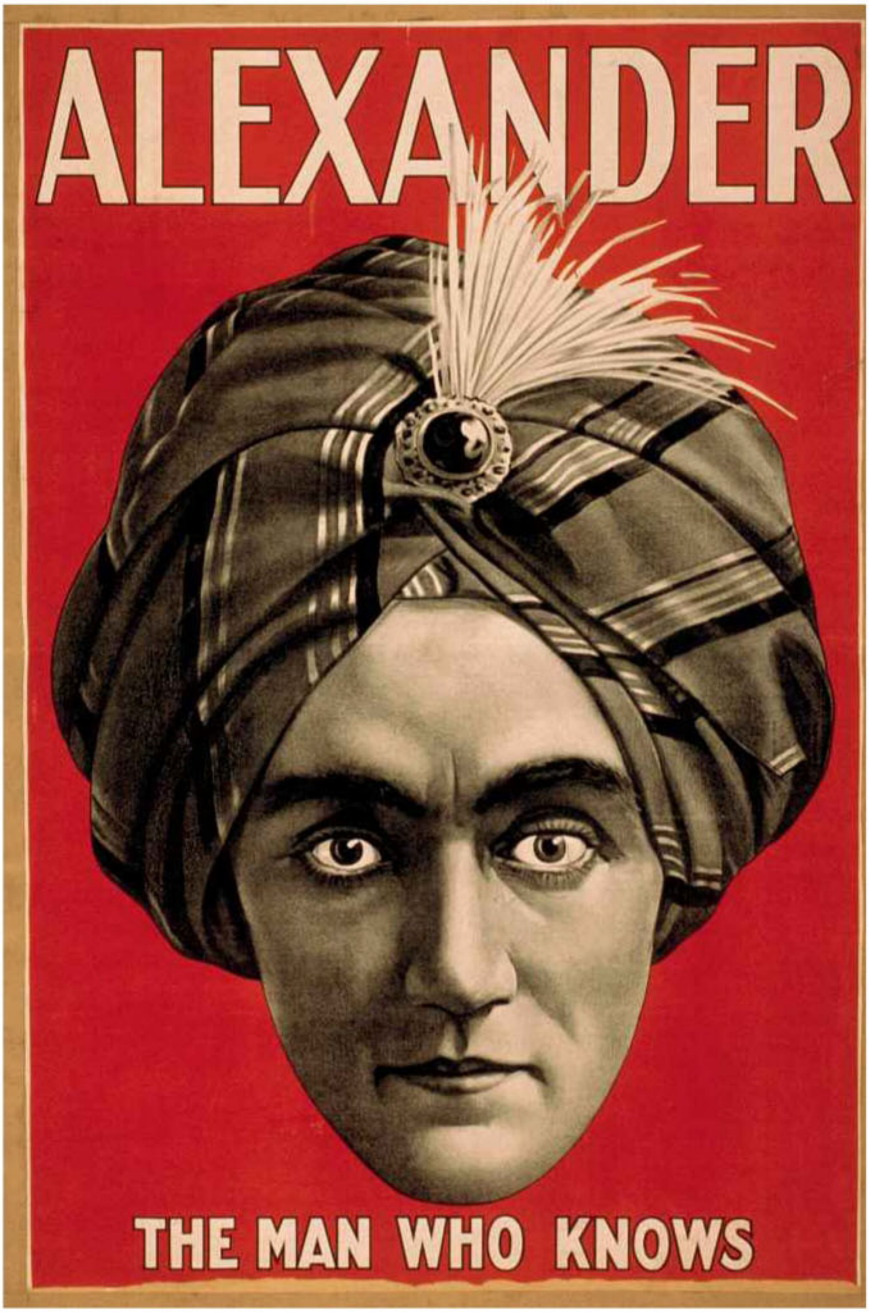
In the era of Spiritualism and the emergence of academic fields like psychology, the originality and power of Alexander's impressive show resided precisely in the ambiguity about whether or not his powers were 'real'. Part of Alexander's genius was to realise that his audiences would be more willing to explore that ambiguity if he associated his initiation into these powers with Oriental mystique. The chances were good that nobody in his audience had ever been to India or even met anyone from India; public information about India was heavily exoticised.

So, in the same period that he was making his fortune on the stage, Alexander started publishing a range of books that professed to expose his methods. These writings have become as controversial and confusing as his stage performances. On the one hand, in 1921, he published an exposé of fraudulent Spiritualist techniques, apparently revealing himself as rationalist, stage performer, and sceptic. This book even illustrated how an unscrupulous performer might make use of a turban to conceal an electrical receiver to enable him to fake telepathic powers with the aid of an accomplice off-stage.

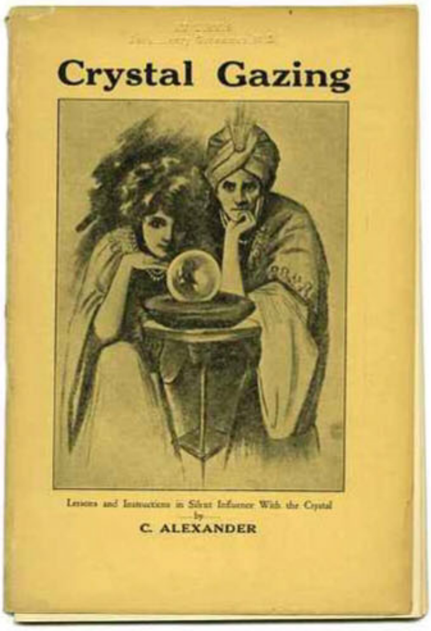
On the other hand, within a few years, Alexander was capitalising on public confusion about his apparent 'powers' and making a small fortune with his own private publishing company. He wrote a series of books such as the *Real Inner Secrets of Psychology* – a five-volume course that professed to explain how to develop real psychic powers based on a combination of 'science' and 'Oriental wisdom'. Alexander's conceit was that the emerging science of psychology would develop into a science of psychic powers if only it took proper account of Asian traditions of introspection and self-cultivation. Since the academic field of psychology seemed reluctant to do this, he offered his books as a form of rectification or corrective for a field that misunderstood itself.

Of Alexander's various books, my personal favourite is the 1924 title *Oriental Wisdom, its Principles and Practice*, in which he explains how "the Orient has always been looked upon as the Great Fount of Inner Knowledge", where discoveries about the nature of the mind and the Universe have been made that have yet to be accounted for in Western science. That is, according to Alexander, 'Oriental Wisdom' should not be seen as anti-scientific but rather as a repository of science-in-waiting or of not-yet-science – Oriental Wisdom was knowledge that looked like magic only for as long as it took scientists to understand and incorporate its principles and practices.

So for Alexander, the Orient emerges as the root of all things esoteric and occult; it is the home and the origin of magic itself. The book goes on to elaborate a course of training and practice, drawn eclectically from Hindu and yogic texts, which should grant the reader legitimate and real psychic powers, such as levitation, mind-reading, and astral projection.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Crystal Gazing

Lessons and Instructions in Silent Influence With the Crystal

—by—

C. ALEXANDER

LEFT: A striking poster showing the piercing eyes of Alexander in the guise of 'The Man Who Knows". **ABOVE:** This 1919 pamphlet by Alexander promised that even untutored society ladies could learn the secrets of crystal gazing. **FACING PAGE:** Chung Ling Soo, bringing together two very different kinds of mystical Eastern iconography.

Mali smiles apologetically at me and then looks sadly at her son. 'Alex, dear, I'm afraid there's no such thing as Jedi – only in the movies.'

Confused but hopeful, Alex looks at me for a response; I just shrug. It's the classic moral dilemma for magicians everywhere: what kinds of ridiculous claims to magical authenticity are you willing to inhabit? Besides, who wouldn't want to be a Jedi?

'But …' manages Alex, beginning a train of thought. 'But, so… how can you do it? I can't do it – I can't read your *mind… so you must be different, right? Different from me?' He pauses thoughtfully. 'Like a Jedi,' he adds, fading a little.*

'It's true that I'm not you,' I reply playfully, already feeling that I'm being dishonest, despite the unequivocal factual truth of my statement. It really is a slippery slope: how to preserve something of the mystery that enables people to enjoy magic without simply lying to them? I never cease to be amazed at how insistently and sometimes thirstily credulous people can be, especially when it comes to things in which we want to believe. I could let this kid believe I'm a Jedi, right? What harm could it do?

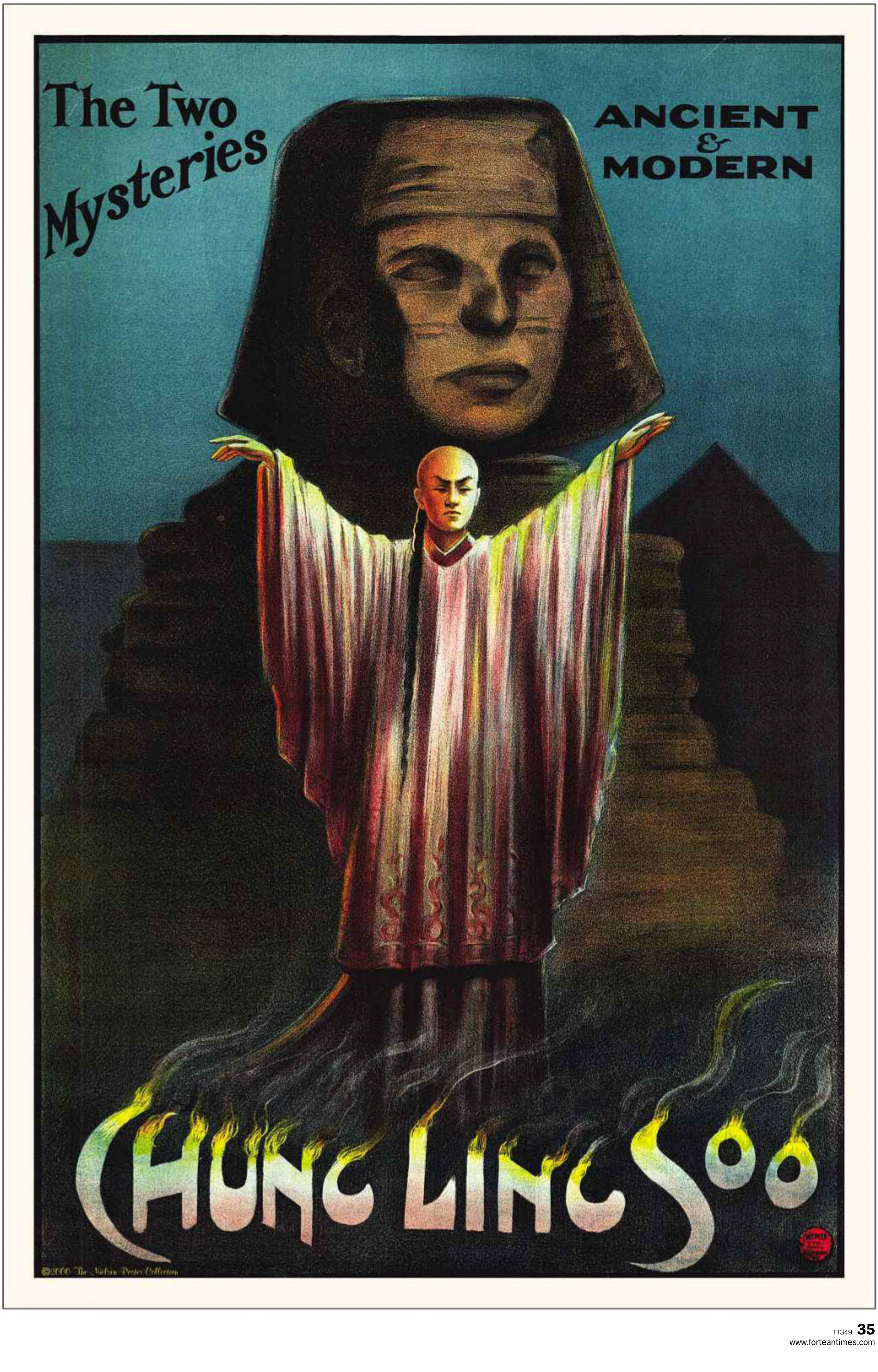
THE WHEAT AND THE CHAFF

Rather than being contradictory or inconsistent, it's helpful to see Alexander's range of publications and activities in the 1920s the context of the grand performance of his life. The consummate performer and long-time conman Claude Alexander sought to establish the credibility of his psychic powers by *both* exposing the fraudulent technologies and techniques of charlatanism *and* by elaborating a space of possibility for apparently legitimate techniques (in the Orient). Alexander emerges as the master of science and magic, ridiculing the impostors (i.e. his competitors) for their cheap tricks and setting himself apart through his claims to a privileged access to ancient Indian wisdom.

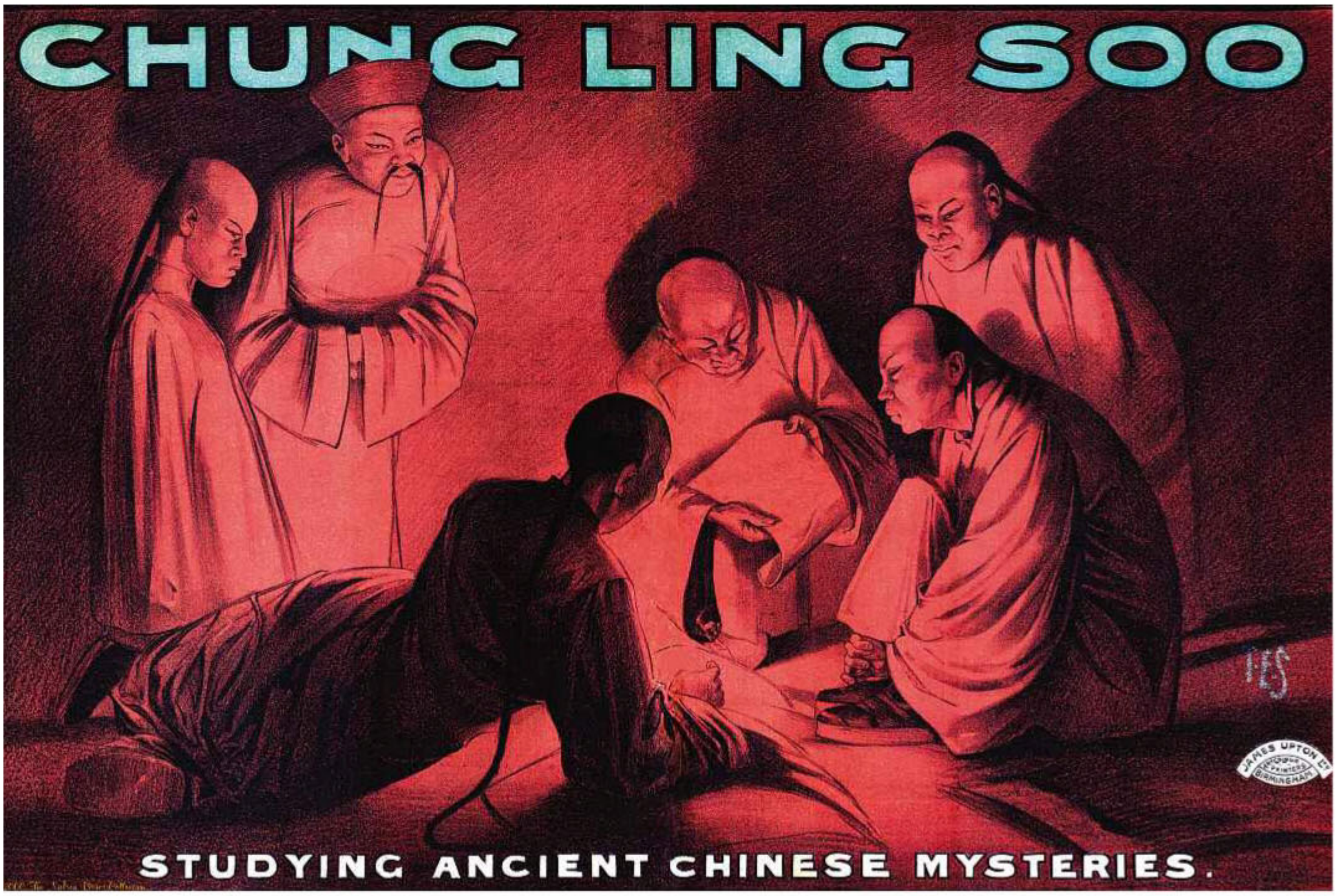
The genius of this unprecedented move was in its apparent openness. Alexander hid the truth in plain sight. He exposed his own methods (such as using the turban to conceal a transmitter, a technique that magicians today recognise as having been developed by Alexander), and then used his own exposé as his alibi. He was effectively saying that the public might be conned by such devices, but that this didn't mean that there was no legitimate way to perform such feats. Indeed, he explains that "the time has come, it seems to me, not to refute these scientists [who ridicule psychic phenomena], but to separate the wheat from the chaff, or the real from the unreal, so that we all may know what to believe."

And then, in the same apparent spirit of openness and exposé, he proceeds to lay out an elaborate and extravagant explanation of the reality of psychic powers in India, explaining how these are not contrary to science (just unknown to it), and hence that anyone can accomplish such powers through disciplined effort and ascetic practice. The implication, hardly accidental, is that *his* powers have been accomplished in this arduous, admirable, and legitimate way. Hence, far from being the subject of interrogation and scepticism, his remarkable stage performances become transformed into *evidence* that psychic powers are real in the Orient (and that science will eventually catch up with this reality).

Perhaps the greatest genius of this life performance is that it was such a successful commercial enterprise – a grand grift. In the end, Alexander's performance of 'Oriental magic' became enmeshed in the sale of an entire counter-cultural worldview, which professed to expand the scientific world into


The Two Mysteries
ANCIENT & MODERN
CHUNG LING SOO
©2000 The Nielsen Poster Collection

COURTESY OF NIELSEN MAGIC COLLECTION


CHUNG LING SOO
STUDYING ANCIENT CHINESE MYSTERIES.
JAMES UPTON LTD PRINTERS BIRMINGHAM

COURTESY OF NIELESEN MAGIC COLLECTION

ABOVE: Although Chung Ling Soo was a Caucasian American called William Robinson, here he appears as a Chinese novice siting at the feet of an ancient master to learn the mystical secrets of the Orient. **BELOW:** Ching Ling Foo (pictured here with Harry Houdini) was a real Chinese magician, but was still eclipsed in popularity by Chung Ling Soo.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

CHUNG LING SOO WAS REALLY A CAUCASIAN CALLED WILLIAM ROBINSON

new (and ancient) realms. In some ways, Alexander was part performer and part cult-leader, figurehead of the *Crystal Silence League*, whose membership paid him a subscription and revered him as the source of their initiation into Oriental Wisdom. Unlike Doctor Strange, Alexander's secret society wasn't dedicated to saving the world from evil magic… Alexander is a fascinating instance of the potential for magicians to transform themselves into spiritual leaders.

Alex looks at me with a dissatisfied expression. He knows that I haven't answered his question, but he can't quite see how the evasion worked. He feels tricked for the first time that evening, and a little pang of guilt makes me take a quick drink. Card tricks suddenly seemed very honest.

'Your mother's right, Alex.' The voice belongs to his brass-buttoned father, who had sidled across to our table and watched surreptitiously over my shoulder. Then, sounding educated and authoritative, he adds: 'But they are based on Japanese monks – did you know that? So if you go to Japan you might find people who can do some amazing things.'

Alex's eyes widen, as though someone has just told him that Santa Claus is real after all. 'Have you been to Japan, mister?'

I have to confess that this new direction took me by surprise, and before I could really think about my answer, I answered honestly. 'Yes, I have. I lived there for a few years and spent some time in a monastery.'

'No. Way.' Alex's eyes bulge with disbelief. 'Did you learn magic there?'

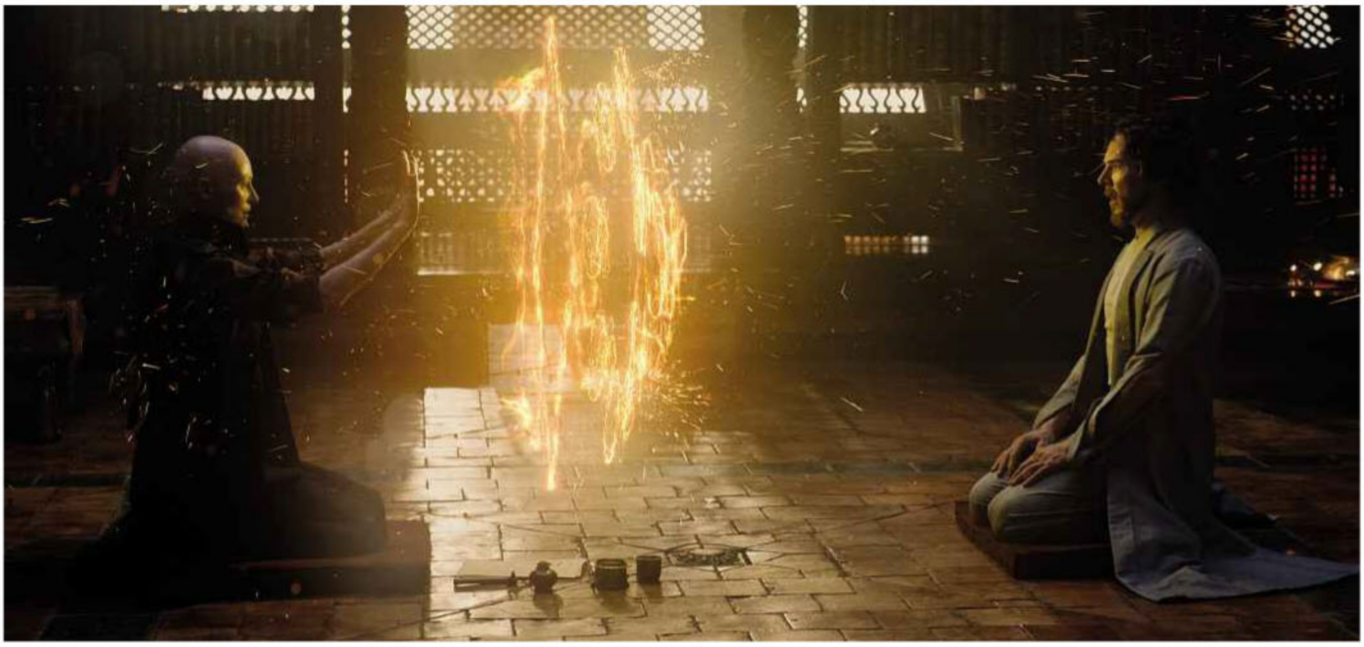
This was just too good to be true. 'Yes,' I say, more than a little self-consciously, trying to work out the ethics of all this as I went along. 'In fact, I've been in Japan and other parts of Asia for the last few years working on a book about magic.'

The truth is such a delicate thing. I'm not lying to him – that was exactly what I'd been doing. In fact, I'd been working on a book about Orientalism and magic… And my answer seems to fill Alex with a happy sense of mystery and wonder about the possibilities of magic in the world. So, why does it feel so wrong?

CONJURING ASIA

In fact, Claude Alexander was neither the first nor the only Western magician to play with the membrane of the 'magic circle' of suspended disbelief that envelops the theatrical stage. Other magicians of the period also experimented with blurring the divide between their everyday life and their stage personæ, effectively incorporating their lives into their act and making their off-stage lives part of the atmosphere of their on-stage performances.

Perhaps the most famous of these magicians was Chung Ling Soo – *the Great Chinese Conjuror* – who astonished audiences all across North America and Europe with his spectacular show of 'Oriental' magic.



DISNEY / MARVEL

ABOVE: In a scene that echoes the poster on the previous page, Stephen Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) learns magical secrets from the Ancient One (Tilda Swinton).

The Great Chinese Conjuror employed a translator so that he could communicate with the Western media, but otherwise performed in silence, apparently unable to speak English. His show was accompanied by exhibitions of Chinese artefacts, and his publicity explained his long and prestigious imperial lineage in China. Indeed, Chung Ling Soo was portrayed as an Imperial Conjuror, steeped in ancient and exclusive Chinese secrets.

And yet, Chung Ling Soo was a Caucasian American called William Robinson (1861-1918), who could not speak Chinese, had never been to China, but who had been enchanted by an actual Chinese magician (Ching Ling Foo, 1854-1922) as a child. While many in the magic community were aware that Robinson was not Chinese, much of the theatre-going public was not.

Unlike Alexander and Stephen Strange (who made no claims to *being* Oriental but instead claimed to have learned the secrets of magic from mystical Oriental wisdom), Robinson actually sought to establish his credentials in Oriental magic by *becoming* Oriental. Indeed, in many ways, Robinson's greatest magic trick was this self-transformation into a 'Chinese' magician, not only by elaborate costuming on stage, but also by attempting to live his everyday life as though this persona were really him. His ability to affect this life-transformation was fundamental to his ability to enchant his audiences at the theatre.

At a time when relatively few people in Europe or the USA knew anything about China, and when most of his audience had never heard anyone speak Chinese (but probably associated the language with speaking English in a strong accent), Robinson's transformation was extremely effective. Indeed, in a famous 'magic duel' in London in 1905, Robinson triumphed over Ching Ling Foo as the public's choice for the 'real' Chinese magician. To an under-informed, stereotype-drenched, and unapologetically racist London public, Robinson's grand pantomime seemed much more 'Chinese' than Ching Ling Foo's more austere authenticity.

Robinson, like Alexander after him, very clearly saw the power of Orientalism as a way to enchant audiences, and he showed an amazing life commitment to inhabiting a world riddled with Oriental magic; in so doing, both Robinson and Alexander succeeded in convincing at least some of a modern, industrial, disenchanted public that their magic emanated from the 'Mystic East.' Sadly, Robinson was eventually killed on stage in 1918 during the infamous 'bullet catch' trick, when his interpretation of the magic of the Chinese Boxers failed to stop the bullet. The Boxers – or the Society of the Righteous and Harmonious Fists – were a group of Chinese patriots who led an uprising against Russian and Western incursions into northern China at the turn of the 20th century; they claimed that they could make themselves impervious to Western weapons (including bullets) through an esoteric system of *qi*-based magic...

As Alex wanders away, holding Mali's hand and chattering excitedly about Jedi, Zen, Japan, and magic, I find myself playing with the remnants of the ice in my glass. I swirl them distractedly and realise that I need another drink; I'm feeling guilty.

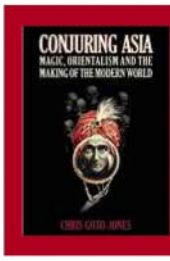
Over the last few years I have encountered all kinds of claims made by charlatans, conmen, and magicians about the Asian origins of their supernatural powers. One of the most important things I've learned, I think, is that these kinds of claims are easy in a cultural climate that already mystifies the 'Orient.' The claims are easy and cheap. And yet they're also easy and enchanting. We fall into them without noticing; somewhere in the back of our minds, we want them to be true.

The waiter brings me a fresh drink. "It's from the gentleman with the brass-buttons on his blazer, sir." The waiter, Sanjay, nods in the direction of Alex's father. For a moment, I wonder whether those conservative buttons mean that he's a doctor or a brain surgeon or something, and then I remember the pain required to break through Doctor Strange's hard-won worldview. I raise the glass in acknowledgement and take a sip. It's good.

I'm reasonably sure that I haven't ruined Alex's life. I didn't extort money from him or try to evangelise about a particular worldview. But I have allowed him to believe that I learned to read minds from a Zen monk in Japan… and that those monks are basically Jedi. I did this because it feels good to think that others believe that I can perform magic, and to see the magic of that belief making someone happy. The free drink was just a bonus. FT

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

CHRIS GOTO-JONES is Professor in Philosophy and Dean of Humanities at the University of Victoria, Canada, and a Professorial Research Fellow at SOAS. He was previously Professor of Comparative Philosophy & Political Thought and Professor of Modern Japan Studies at Leiden University.



Conjuring Asia: Magic, Orientalism, and the Making of the Modern World by Chris Goto-Jones is published by Cambridge University Press at £64.99 hardback and £18.99 paperback.

HAPPY OLD CHRISTMAS

You thought it was all over, but due to the Orthodox refusal to accept the new fangled Gregorian calendar, many people – from Margate to Memphis – will still be celebrating Christmas in January. **TED HARRISON** goes in search of some stubborn old traditions...

It is January and Christmas is over for another year. There are those who are sad the festivities are over and others who are much relieved.

Yet it's not over for some: they haven't even started. While millions gorge themselves on roast turkey and Christmas pudding on 25 December, many devout Orthodox Christians spend the day observing the 40-day fast that precedes Christmas, waiting for 6 January. It is only when the first star is seen, as the light of Old Christmas Eve fades, that the fun begins.

A millennium and a half after Julius Cæsar had introduced a uniform calendar across the Roman Empire it was discovered there were some miscalculations that had resulted, over time, in the calendar getting out of kilter with the solar year. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII decided that the errors should be corrected. 25 December by the Julian calendar became 6 January by the Gregorian one. Many Orthodox Christians, however, refused to accept the calendar change and the loss of 11 days and continue to this day to keep to the old Julian calendar.

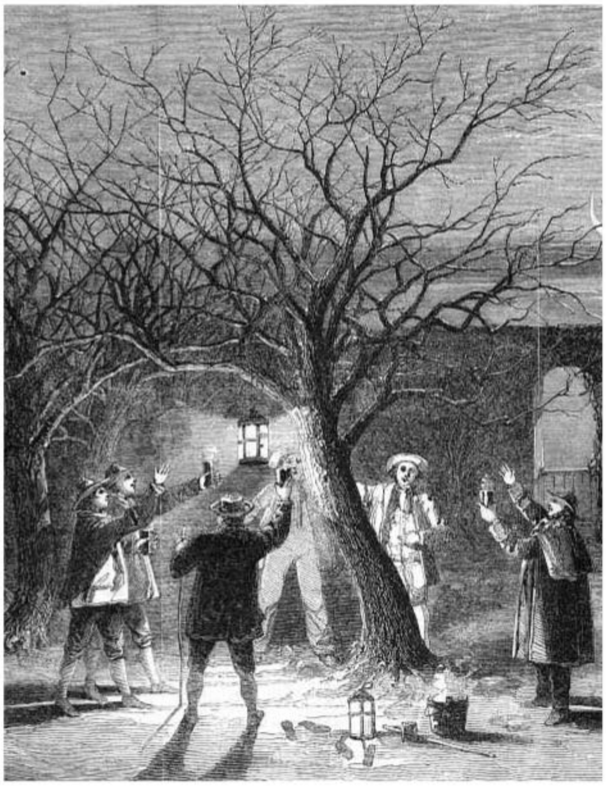
So orthodox churches in Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Serbia celebrate the birth of Christ on 7 January, along with the monks of Mount Athos in Greece. As the years go by, the date of Old Christmas gets later and later. Currently it is 7 January, and by 2100 Orthodox Christmas will be celebrated on 8 January.

Under the Soviets Christmas was discouraged, but today Orthodox Christmas is a national holiday in Russia. The banks are closed and it is a day for giving presents and family gatherings. Old Christmas Eve, by tradition, is the day for fortune telling. If she looks in a mirror by the light of candles, a young woman will see an image of her future husband.

Twelfth Night, when most Christmas decorations are taken down, the Feast of Epiphany, celebrating the story of the Three Wise Men, and Old Christmas coincide around the end of the first week of January, and many Old Christmas traditions have been rebranded to suit the new calendar. But some places, in both Britain and the USA, resolutely refuse to go along with this: when it comes to Christmas the Julian calendar stills holds sway.

In Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the Amish community has not moved with the times. Not only do the Amish not use cars or other mechanical devices at any time of the year, sticking to horse, buggy and muscle power, many also mark Christmas on 7 January. Admittedly on 25 December they join in with their neighbours, in their own restrained fashion (no Santa Claus for instance), but to the traditionalists Old Christmas is a more important holy day.

Members will fast until noon, enjoy a special meal later in the day and get together with their families. While mainstream America is back at work, Amish-owned businesses, as well as businesses that are staffed by Amish, may well be closed at Old Christmas. To demonstrate that they have rejected the rampant commercialism of



ABOVE: Wassailing apple trees with hot cider in Devonshire on 6 January 1861. **FACING PAGE:** A ceremonial burning of oak branches in front of Saint Sava Church, Belgrade, on 6 January 2016.

THE PRINT COLLECTOR / GETTY IMAGES

ANDREJ ISAKOVIC / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

WHEN IT COMES TO CHRISTMAS THE JULIAN CALENDAR STILL HOLDS SWAY

MATTHEW LLOYD / GETTY IMAGES

LEFT: Margate's Orthodox Church marks Old Christmas with the Blessing of the Seas on 6 January every year. **BELOW:** A steaming pack of Ba' players and spectators in Broad Street, Kirkwall, Orkney.

A PIPE BAND ATTENDS THE ORTHODOX ARHCBISHOP

the all-American Christmas there is now a movement among some Amish to reject the 25 December holiday entirely.

Not being Roman Catholic countries, England and Wales did not adopt Pope Gregory's new calendar until the mid 18th century. This was 150 years after Scotland and 170 years after most of Catholic Europe. The British were not the slowest at catching up with the new. At the beginning of the 20th century, so strong was the Russian Orthodox influence on secular life that Russia continued to be 11 days behind its European neighbours. Russians had to wait until 1918, and the overthrow of the Tsar, before the country was brought in line with the rest of the world.

When England and Wales made the change, instead of welcoming the convenience of being synchronised with the rest of Europe, there were widespread complaints, an early instance perhaps of Brexit-style rebellion. In 1752, it was decreed by Act of Parliament, that March was to be shortened by 11 days. One of the days lost was Lady Day, 25 March, the traditional day when tenants paid their rents. So vociferous was the outcry from tenants that they'd be paying a year's rent for just 354 days that the government relented and agreed not to change the financial year; which is why the tax year starts on 5 April.

Shetland was one of several places in the British Isles that stood firm against the change. After both Scotland and Britain as a whole had amended the calendar, the islanders continued to celebrate Christmas on 5 January, changing to 6 January after the leap year in 1800. The festival in the far north was more Norse than Christian and was referred to as Yule. It was not just a time for drinking and making merry but for stories to be told and for the Trows to emerge. The Trows are cousins to the Norwegian Trolls and are mischievous little people living in caves or underground. They have magical powers and were wont to lure humans into their world with irresistible music. When one of these abductees emerged after what to him or her had been a few hours in the Trows' realm, many years had passed in human terms and friends were either dead or very old.

"On Tulya's E'en, seven days before Yule Day, Trows were supposed to have permission to leave their hideouts and live above ground. At dusk, humans took various precautions in order to guard life and property. Two straws were taken from the stock of corn and hay, formed into a cross and laid at the stile or gate leading into the yard where the corn and hay were stored. A hair was taken from the tail of each cow or other animal; the hairs were pleated and fastened over the byre door. Finally, just to make sure that the Trows were kept at bay, a blazing peat was carried through all the outhouses."

There were many families in Unst, the northernmost of the Shetland islands, that still celebrated on the old date as recently as the 1950s. Only when children went south to school and came home for 25 December did the custom fade, although some families still mark Old Christmas with low-key festivities. On the Shetland island of Foula, however, the old ways are still preserved. Christmas is celebrated as ever on 6 January as 'Auld Yule', and old New Year falls a week later. The island once had a population of over 250, but now barely 30 hardy folk brave the remoteness and fierce Atlantic winds. Due to its isolation Foula has always done its own thing. Two hundred years ago the people spoke a different language to the rest of Britain – Norn, the language of the Vikings. The last person to speak Norn died as recently as 1926. Island resident Jim Gear says that keeping Old Christmas, "is part of our tradition".

The tradition in some parts of rural Wales is to keep Christmas on 25 December but to mark Old New Year on 13 January. Children in the Gwaun Valley, Pembrokeshire, have the day off school to celebrate Hen Galan and travel from house to house in the area singing traditional Welsh songs and being rewarded with gifts or 'calennig' of sweets and money. The older generations enjoy a New Year's evening meal and drink.

More soberly, the residents of Llandysul, Ceredigion, come together in the church for hymn singing and recitations from the Bible to celebrate Hen Galan, joined by members of other congregations in the surrounding area. Until the 19th century the Old New Year had been celebrated with drinking and a rowdy game of football. In 1833 the vicar of

ORKNEYPICS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

CHRISTOPHER FURLONG / GETTY IMAGES

ABOVE: Hundreds gather in the Lincolnshire village of Haxey on 6 January to take part in the Haxey Hood Game.

Llandysul decided to bring order to the chaos and introduced the new festival. It's not all religion, however: the day is often rounded off with a good Welsh supper.

In some cases Old Christmas celebrations have become so confused with the Twelfth Night and Epiphany traditions of the new calendar that it has become impossible to sort one from the other. In Margate, Kent, the local Orthodox Church marks Old Christmas with a ceremony known as The Blessing of the Seas; although to stay in line with the other Christian traditions, the 6 January tradition is described as an Epiphany rite.

For the last 50 years a procession of religious and civic dignatories in full regalia, rather incongruously led by a pipe band, attend the Orthodox archbishop as he walks to the beach.

Doves are released to symbolise peace, and the Orthodox Archbishop distributes sprigs of rosemary, but "the most dramatic moment of the service is towards the end when a wooden cross decorated with greenery is thrown into the sea to bless the waters. Immediately a volunteer, or sometimes more than one, jumps in to retrieve it and hand it back to the archbishop… the cross is attached to a long ribbon the end of which the archbishop firmly retains."

Bodmin in Cornwall has been wassailing on 6 January for at least 400 years, well before the calendar was changed. The wassailers, dressed in top hats, tour the pubs, as well as visiting old people's homes and the council offices, singing traditional carols and Cornish wassailing songs. The aim is to offer festive cheer with a drink of ale from the wassail bowl whilst collecting for charity. About 70 years ago the original wassailing bowl, bequeathed in the will of a town clerk in 1624, went missing and was last seen on display on top of a plant pot in a shop in Honey Street in Bodmin.

The Christmas tradition of burning the ashen faggot is followed in many places in the West Country at Christmas in late December, but in Curry Rivel in Somerset they wait until Old Christmas. The faggot is a large log bound with withies that is burned in the fireplace. Very often the local pub organises the event and as each withy burns through, another round of pints is ordered. The folk of Curry Rivel add wassailing to the evening's entertainment, going round the village and ending up in the bar.

The ashen faggot tradition has parallels around Europe. In Serbia on Old Christmas Eve a tree is felled and a log cut from it is placed ceremonially in the fireplace while bundles of straw are brought into the house.

In several places, most famously Kirkwall in Orkney, a primitive form of football is played on Christmas Day. Heaving scrums of young men push their way through the streets, past boarded-up shops, playing the Ba' Game.

What looks like an anarchic form of rugby in Haxey, Lincolnshire, is known as the Haxey Hood Game and has been played since the 14th century (see **FT336:6-7**). It too could have been a Christmas Day sport, but now it is played a —week into January around Old Christmas. The game can last many hours and involves the local pubs, a Fool and characters known as Boggins. The hood at the centre of the scrummage is a leather tube about a yard long.

Around the same time, but an ocean away, at Graceland, Elvis Presley's mansion home in Memphis, Tennessee, Christmas is extended, not to keep Old Christmas, but to celebrate the birth of the King of Rock 'n' Roll. It's second only to his death day in August for gatherings of fans, and hundreds meet on the lawn in front of the mansion on 7 January to cut a cake and recall their hero. Until Elvis's nativity has been celebrated, the Christmas lights, which everywhere else come down on Twelfth Night, remain on full twinkling display.

In some countries, such as Spain, children expect presents from Santa Claus on 25 December and more from The Three Kings at Epiphany, which coincides with Old Christmas. The great advantage of keeping to Old Christmas, in whatever form, is that it doesn't necessarily exclude celebrating new Christmas as well – it just provides an excuse for doing it twice. FT

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

TED HARRISON is a writer, artist and former BBC religious affairs correspondent. A regular contributor to FT, his latest book is *The Death and Resurrection of Elvis Presley*.

THE OCCULT LIFE OF MONTAGUE SUMMERS

Was Montague Summers a priest or a dabbler in the dark arts? With one foot in the Catholic Church and another in the world of the supernatural, he has been claimed as both. **BRIAN REGAL** explores the real 'occult life' of one of the great eccentrics of English letters.

A 1934 review of the book *The Werewolf* in the journal *Man* said of the author that "it is unfortunate that a writer of such erudition and of so recondite a literature should be so lacking as he is in the spirit of scientific inquiry, for he is not only uncritical but definitely obscurantist." [1] The reviewer was correct, but missed the point – an easy thing to do when writing about the the book's author, Montague Summers (1880-1948). Regularly characterised as an occultist and/or priest, Summer was seen by admirers as intriguing, but also a bit dangerous. He wrote a series of books on esoteric lore and had acquaintances in the occult world, including Aleister Crowley, which led to his reputation for being involved in the dark arts.

His life had been such that author Dennis Wheatley (1897-1977; see 'Dennis and all his Works', **FT256:38-43**), who knew him personally, used Summers as the model for the character of Canon Copley-Syle in his occult themed novel *To the Devil – A Daughter* (1953). Even towards the end of Summers's life, his reputation brought inquiries for occult information. He told the Cambridge University musicologist EJ Dent (1876-1957) that: "I had a letter from… the President of the Pentacle Club." With a tired sigh he added: "What he really wanted to know… was how to celebrate a Black Mass." By this point Summers did not have the energy to reply. [2]

Montague Summers certainly had an interest in the occult, but aside from his published writings and the gossip surrounding his ownership of a medallion he claimed once saved him from a vampire, little evidence exists supporting the notion that he engaged in any magical activity. He wanted to be thought of as a thaumaturge, but in reality it was all a show – in both the literal and figurative sense. Rather than occultist or priest Montague Summers was a performer playing a role. His real occult – that is, hidden – life was one of building a career as an author.

ABOVE: A photograph of the young Montague Summers in full clerical garb.

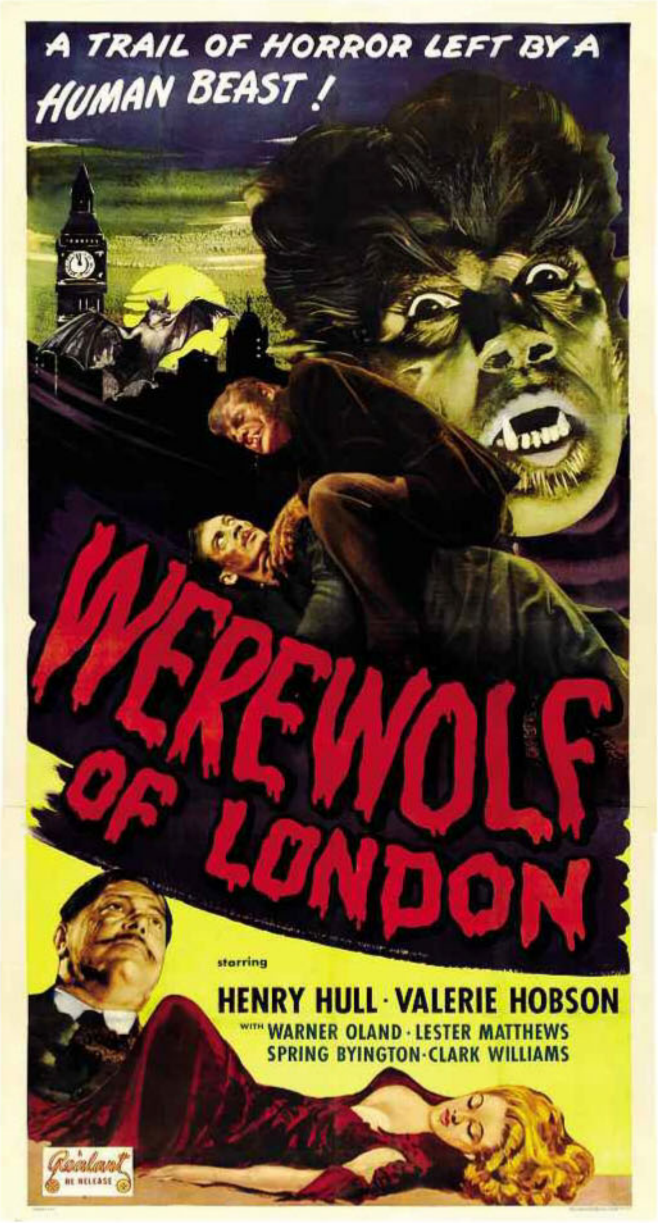
> HE CLAIMED A MEDALLION ONCE SAVED HIM FROM A VAMPIRE

EARLY LIFE

One of the great eccentrics of English letters, Augustus Montague Summers (1880-1948) is difficult to pin down. He produced a body of work that took in werewolves and vampires, and the first English translation of the notorious 15th-century treatise on witch-hunting, *Malleus Maleficarum*, but also included treatises on Shakespeare and obscure English playwrights. Born in Bristol, Summers's favourite retreat was the family's comfortable and well stocked library. He spent some of his happiest childhood hours engrossed in books on many topics in the womb-like environment, which he describes at length in his posthumously published autobiography *The Galanty Show* (1980). Here he developed his love of the occult and of early English theatre. As a boy he attended the local Clifton College and in 1899 entered Trinity College, Oxford, as a Commoner. [3] He did not excel academically, exhibiting that behaviour, not uncommon among the creative, of doing intense scholarly work on his own but not in the classroom. He lodged outside the college, his name not appearing on the rolls of any clubs or activities, including the Oxford University Dramatic Society, and he appears in no college photographs, suggesting a detachment from mainstream college life. Despite his later reputation as a literary gadfly, he obviously had a preference for other spheres. [4] He did love the city, though, saying the only other comparable places in the world were Rome and Venice. He referred to Oxford as "a city of ghosts", even claiming to have seen one there. He graduated with a Fourth Level degree in theology in June of 1903 (in 1906 he received the MA in theology) then attended Lichfield Theological College, Staffordshire.

By 1908 Summers had been ordained a deacon of the Anglican Church and curate of the Bristol diocese of Trinity Bitton. [5] Shortly after this he found himself immersed in a scandal involving allegations of sexual improprieties with boys. His sexuality is as difficult to ascertain as any other aspect of his life. He may well have been a homosexual, or he may simply have enjoyed the ambiguity of letting others think what they wanted without confirming anything one way or another.

His eccentricity extended to his person as well as his beliefs. Summers dressed in distinctive and quirky self-designed outfits and hairstyle suggestive of an 18th century cleric. According to his biographer, Father Brocard Sewell, Summers was indeed ordained a deacon in 1908 by the spelunking Anglican Bishop of Bristol, George Forrest Browne (1833-1930). In 1911, following the sex scandal, he converted to Roman Catholicism and was ordained a Catholic Deacon. The Clifton Bishop, however, would not make Summers a priest, so he went to Italy and found a Cardinal who may have ordained him as such in an unorthodox and dubious process. In the end, Summers found it easier to simply assume the role of priest – styling himself the Reverend Alphonsus Joseph-Mary Augustus Montague Summers – rather than actually becoming one. Unfortunately, few of the records concerning these events are extant. Similarly, few know of his life as an author beyond the superficial fact of his published works.[6]


A TRAIL OF HORROR LEFT BY A HUMAN BEAST!
WEREWOLF OF LONDON
starring
HENRY HULL · VALERIE HOBSON
WITH WARNER OLAND · LESTER MATTHEWS
SPRING BYINGTON · CLARK WILLIAMS
Gaulont
BE RELEASE

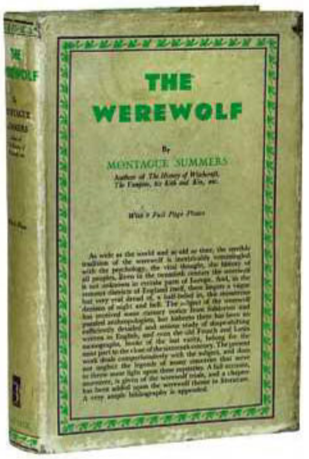
LEFT: Summers had some innovative ideas about marketing his book on werewolves, sugesting to his publishers that they link it to the UK release of the 1935 Universal film *Werewolf of London*.

WITCHES AND WEREWOLVES

Most often associated with books on the supernatural, Summers published a number of non-occult themed works on English literature. The wide range of his interests is illustrated in titles ranging from *Jane Austin: An Appreciation* (1918) to *The Marquis de Sade* (1920). In 1934 he published *The Restoration Theatre* and the next year *The Playhouse of Pepys*. Intending to create a definitive multi-volume work on early English theatre, he produced reprints of restoration plays and lives of the authors for which he wrote the introductions and the biographies.[7]

Summers began writing on occult subjects in the 1920s when editor CK Ogden approached him to write books on witches and werewolves. The editor of the 100-plus-volume International Library of Psychology for the publisher Routledge, Ogden (1889-1957) was a respected literary man who worked with Bernard Shaw, Siegfried Sassoon, Thomas Hardy, and other members of the English literary establishment.

Over lunch in 1923 at the Royal Societies Club in London Ogden asked Summers to contribute a volume to the History of Civilization series. Summers agreed, went right to work, and produced *The History of Witchcraft and Demonology* (1926) and *The Geography of Witchcraft* (1927). Summers wanted to clear up what he thought were the many misconceptions and misunderstandings about the occult. His bibliography for *The History of Witchcraft* ran to 1,000 entries of obscure works in different languages. He told Ogden that "there is nothing of the kind in English."[8]

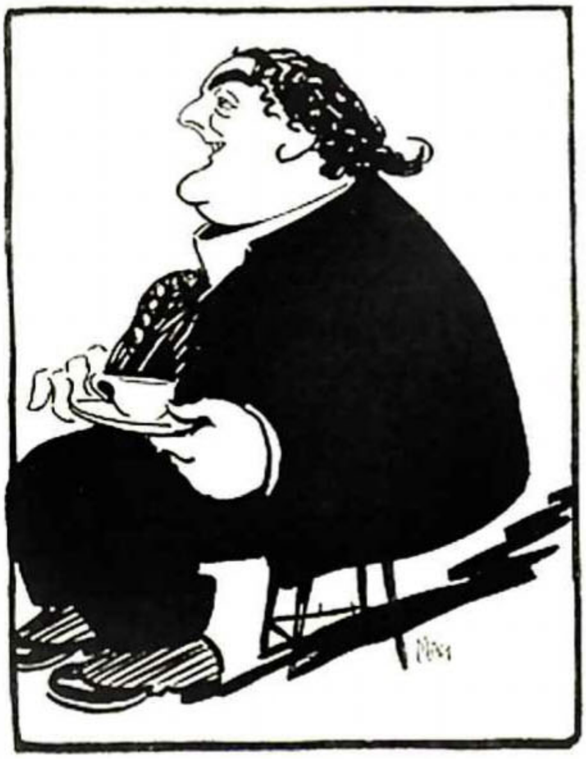


The idea that Summers was involved in occult practices may have come in part from his writing, in which he seems to confirm he believed these phenomena were genuine. After ploughing through vast reams of printed sources at Oxford's Bodleian Library, Summers published *The Werewolf* in 1933. From the beginning of his book, Summers argues that werewolves are real in the traditional sense of being humans who can shape-shift into demonic, murderous, wolves. He faults other authors for not taking the subject seriously enough. "They did not realise," he says, "that werewolfery was a terrible and enduring fact." As is common among authors on fantastic subjects, Summers sees himself as a scholar, yet denigrates academic historians who also investigate the topic and dismiss it. Like the theologian he pretended to be, Summers lectures the boffins for missing the point "if they disregard the science of God for the science of man." Anthropologists and historians will never write well on the subject of werewolves because "they cannot read the riddle", being too hidebound by their education. He claimed that scepticism itself was the problem: the rationality of sceptical scholars kept them from seeing the truth.

PUBLISHING THE OCCULT

The extant body of correspondence with his primary publishers, Kegan Paul, reveal Summers to be deeply committed to scholarship, yet also a petulant, sometimes desperate man, who had difficulty in meeting deadlines and adhering to contracts. These foibles came not from laziness, but from a perfectionist's approach to his work. The letters also reveal him to have far greater concern for his literary output – hunting down sources, getting his books sold, and getting paid for his efforts – than any interest in the occult as an operative activity.

For example, following the success of his early books on witchcraft, Kegan Paul asked Summers about doing a less scholarly work on the history of witches for the popular market. They acknowledged the high scholarly quality of the earlier efforts, but felt that very quality kept them from selling as well as they should have.[9] A condensed text with less technical jargon, archaic language, and fewer citations, the publishers argued, would sell at a much brisker rate. Summers agreed, but then Kegan Paul asked for a sample chapter prior to issuing a contract. They knew he could do scholarly work, but wanted some assurance he could write for a general

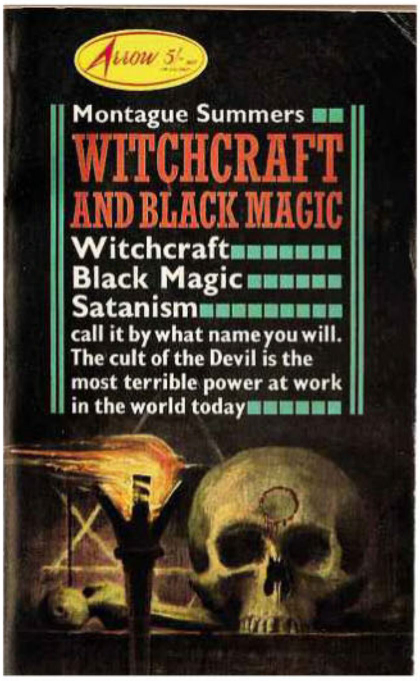


LEFT: A caricature of Montague Summers. **BELOW:** Many of Summers's works on the supernatural remained in print in cheap paperback editions long after his death.

audience. Outraged at what he saw as an insult to his reputation, Summers wrote angrily to tell them that he felt "slighted and hurt" that they should ask him to prove himself in this way as if he were a novice: "I am mortified and deeply aggravated."[10] As a seasoned writer he felt Kegan Paul should just send him a contract and an advance and let him get on with it. Infuriated, Summers told a friend that editors "are kittle cattle, unaccountable people."[11]

Summers already had no fewer than three separate book contracts with Kegan Paul that he still had to deliver: *The Life of Dryden*, *A History of Mysticism*, and *The Antichrist*.[12] While *The Life of Dryden* was nearing completion, the other two had barely been started. Kegan Paul offered to cancel all three of these to allow him to get on with the witchcraft book. Summers said he would go along if they paid him a fee for his effort. Kegan Paul would not pay for work not delivered, so Summers said he would keep working on them (in the end, only *The Life of Dryden* would be published). They eventually offered him a contract for the witchcraft book, now titled *A Popular History of Witchcraft*, in 1935.

DID SUMMERS GENUINELY BELIEVE IN THE SUPERNATURAL WORLD HE WROTE ABOUT?


Arrow 5/-
Montague Summers
WITCHCRAFT AND BLACK MAGIC
Witchcraft
Black Magic
Satanism
call it by what name you will. The cult of the Devil is the most terrible power at work in the world today

Summers's entire publishing career can be seen as a juggling act. He pestered Kegan Paul, and other publishers, with endless ideas for books. Because of his notoriety they would issue a contract and an advance. He would then ask for more contracts and more advances. Desperate for both literary reputation and financial support, all he had was his writing. Unfortunately, he could not keep pace. His meticulous and perfectionist approach meant he produced work slowly – far too slowly for the publisher's liking. He would then ask for further advances against sales. Kegan Paul at first gave in; then, with manuscripts still not delivered and with far more money being given him than a particular book would ever bring in sales, the advances stopped.

Added to this, Summers sometimes had trouble adhering to the contract. The publisher would say that the book could be no more than 60,000 words, and he would deliver a manuscript of 90,000. The manuscript would be sent back with a demand to shorten it, something he loathed doing. He never really understood why he had to produce books of a certain length, trying to cram every possible detail into his work. In addition, he disliked typewriters and sent in handwritten texts. He said: "I can hardly type at all. It's a nuisance when publishers demand a typed copy."[13] When the publishers received his manuscript they would have to send it out to be turned into a typescript; only then would they know the actual length of the book, and the shortening process would begin.

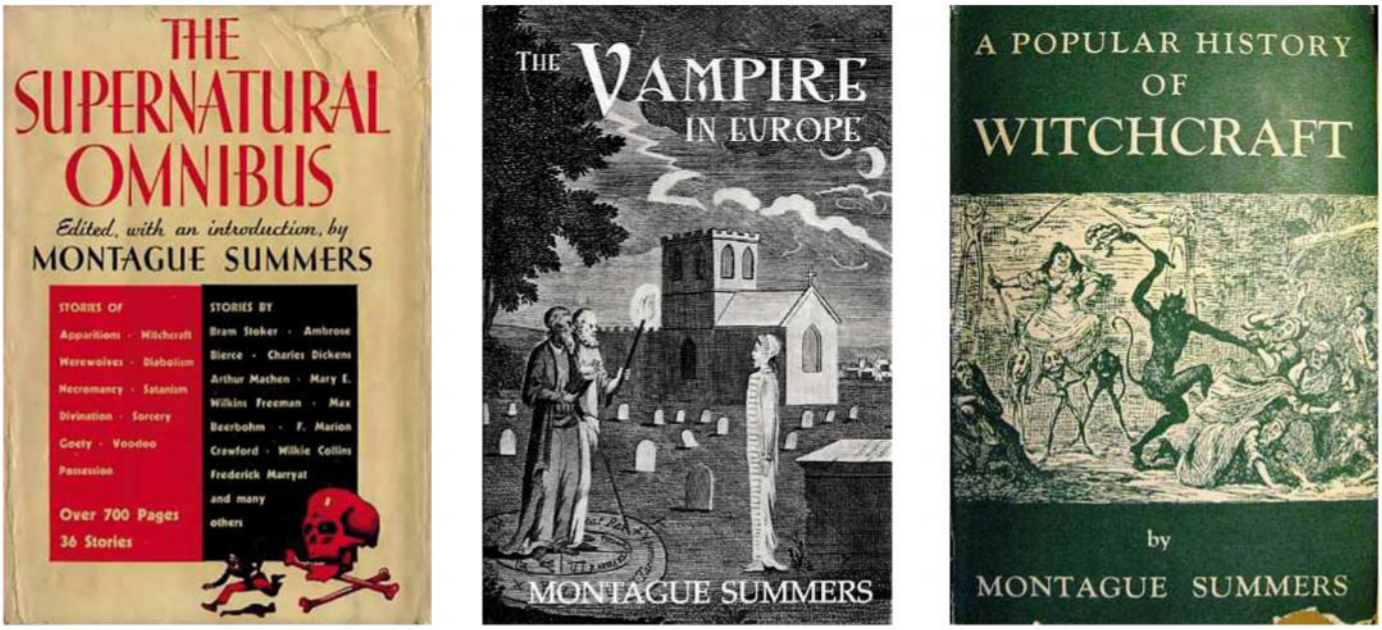
Summers had novel ideas about how to promote his books as well, feeling that they had a wider connection with popular culture, particularly film. In 1935 a pair of horror movies, *Mark of the Vampire* and *The Werewolf of London*, hit English cinemas. He wrote excitedly to Kegan Paul that the interest in these films could profit them all. He said, "It is recognised that both themes [of the films] were suggested by and in effect borrowed from my books."[14] If only the publishers would see this trend and promote his works as linked to the films, sales would soar. They did little to capitalise on the occult cinema so his frustration grew.

His workaholic ways also brought Summers's ill health. He began to feel sick and lethargic, and to suffer from headaches. A doctor told him to take a break from writing and research, but that was impossible. He told Kegan Paul: "I cannot afford either the time or the money."[15] Using his weak condition as a ploy, he once again asked Kegan Paul for more money. When they refused, he flew into a tantrum. "I cannot help thinking," he said with all the petulance of a child not getting his way, "that the time has come when I am no longer of any use to you."[16] Kegan Paul tried to mollify him, assuring him of the respect they had for him, but in the end his books simply were not selling very well so they would not be fronting him any more money.

Exasperating the publisher further, halfway through writing *A Popular History of Witchcraft*, Summers tried to reconfigure it from a general audience work back to one meant for specialists. Kegan Paul would have none of it. "We want what we arranged for," they snapped. "And what we want is a popular history," not a work meant for scholars.[17] As usual, he asked for more money. "We cannot see our way," they said, "to advancing you the further sum of £20."[18] Stomping his foot, he wrote back: "I feel that I have been treated with a lack of consideration… It is impossible to work under such conditions."[19] They reminded him that the witchcraft manuscript, which he had just delivered, was well behind schedule. He, in turn, tried to guilt-trip them with what became a standard excuse: his witchcraft research had involved an outlay of his own money and was proving "far more difficult than I expected."[20] To make matters worse, when Kegan Paul typeset the book they found it to be 30,000 words longer than agreed. As with so many other of Summers's manuscripts, they had to send it back to him for extensive revisions, causing it to fall even further behind schedule. It finally appeared in 1937.[21]

MEETING THE BEAST

Did Summers genuinely believe in the supernatural world he wrote about? In 1931, he edited an anthology of weird tales called


THE SUPERNATURAL OMNIBUS
Edited, with an introduction, by
MONTAGUE SUMMERS
STORIES OF
Apparitions · Witchcraft
Werewolves · Diabolism
Necromancy · Satanism
Divination · Sorcery
Goety · Voodoo
Possession
Over 700 Pages
36 Stories
STORIES BY
Bram Stoker · Ambrose Bierce · Charles Dickens
Arthur Machen · Mary E. Wilkins Freeman · Max Beerbohm · F. Marion Crawford · Wilkie Collins
Frederick Marryat
and many others
THE VAMPIRE IN EUROPE
MONTAGUE SUMMERS
A POPULAR HISTORY OF WITCHCRAFT
by
MONTAGUE SUMMERS

ABOVE: Summers's literary work ranged from writing scholarly books on gothic fiction and Restoration theatre to studies of occult subjects, as well as editing some excellent collections of supernatural fiction. **BELOW:** Summers met Aleister Crowley on numerous occasions in the 1930s when they both lived in the London Borough of Richmond.

The Supernatural Omnibus. In his introduction he craftily asks if an author on occult subjects need be a true believer in the subject in order to write an authentic book. Will an author, for example, write more convincing macabre tales if he is a believer in the reality of ghosts? Summers suggested that his work would be harder "were I not myself convinced of the sensible reality of apparitions." [22] In *The Galanty Show* he states unequivocally that as far as the reality of witchcraft is concerned "there could be and there is no sort of doubt concerning" its reality. [23] But he loved to be evasive when asked about his occult leanings, gleefully creating a mystique around himself as the combined priest and occultist. The outrageousness of his texts forces his readers to either accept or discount them, almost as if he is testing them to see how gullible *they* are. As his biographer Brocard Sewell suggests: "Summers was a born actor." [24] His writing is a sort of performance on paper, as dramatic as anything done on stage.

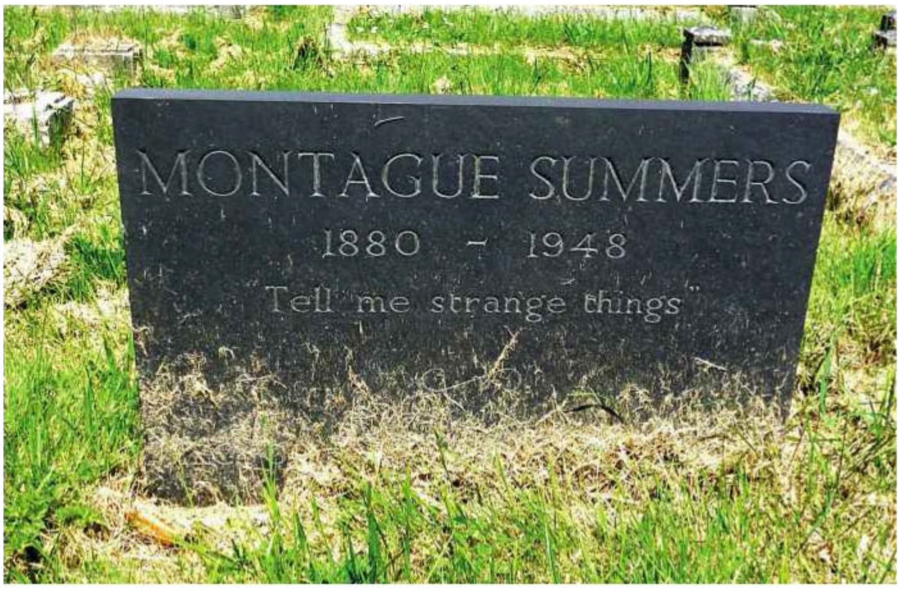
An examination of the extant materials, frustratingly limited, suggests Summers's reputation as an occultist is based on bluff and guile. He did little more than read and write about it. He did know Aleister Crowley, though that relationship may have been overblown as well. Crowley (1875-1947) saw himself as a prophet of a new age. He established himself as a member of the esoteric Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a group that included occult virtuosi such as Samuel MacGregor Mathers and AE Waite and an exotic cast of members and hangers-on who shrouded themselves in the cloak of fashionable occultism.

In his biography of Crowley, CR Cammell discusses how he personally knew both Crowley and Summers while all three lived in the London suburb of Richmond. Cammell was the editor of the magazine *The Connoisseur* for which Summers had written articles on rare books. Summers moved to London after leaving Oxford in 1934. Once there, he altered his lifestyle. Where in the past "he had been a lion of the gay cultured society" he now turned into a semi-recluse, spending his time in a stylishly appointed house with his extensive book collection. [25] Approaching old age, he retreated from the outside world by reconstructing that wonderful period of his childhood spent in the warm and protective lair of his father's library.

GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHIC AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES

Cammell's narrative is vague on the relationship between the two occult enthusiasts. He states that Crowley and Summers "had met several times in the past" but had not seen each other in the years prior to Cammell bringing them together for a sort of occult *tête-à-tête* at his flat. In Crowley's unpublished diary there is a single entry dated 5 July 1929, where Crowley describes meeting Summers for the first time in London. The encounter must have gone well, as Crowley writes: "Dinner with Montague Summers – the most amusing evening I have spent in decades!" [26] At another time, however, when asked why he and Summers did not see each other more often, Crowley, said with a hint of playful sarcasm that if they had met he would "change him [Summers] into a toad." [27] Cammell also claims that Summers was deeply interested in Crowley and his work to the point of collecting newspaper clippings and following his career. Cammell remembers the two having spent the evening at his house in robust and convivial conversation talking of many mutual interests "with sparkling wit and good-fellowship." Other than these few fleeting occasions, however, there is little evidence that Crowley and Summers shared anything more than a mutual interest and respect for one another as fellow flouters of social convention.

In the extensive extant corpus



DR TONY SHAW/ ONYSHAW3.BLOGSPOT.CO.UK/

LEFT: Summers's grave in Richmond Cemetery was unmarked until the 1980s, when the Summers Project succceeded in raising enough money for a gravestone. Summers's manservant Hector Stuart-Forbes is buried in the same plot. **ABOVE:** One of the few photographic portraits of Summers, taken circa 1939.

of Crowley's writing and correspondence there is no mention of Summers, other than the aforementioned diary entry. Despite Cammell's insistence on Summers being an admirer of Crowley, the one time he speaks of him in *The Galanty Show* is neither important nor especially flattering. In 1930 Crowley received an invitation from the Oxford Poetry Society to give a public lecture on the life of Gilles de Rais. Crowley thought the 15th century French soldier, compatriot of Joan of Arc and serial child murderer, wrongly accused. After advance advertising brought the proposed talk much attention, worried Oxford officials cancelled it, which only created more public interest. Crowley responded by publishing his lecture, hoping to cash in. Summers commented dryly on the anti-climax of what many expected to be a racy and controversial text: "It was bought with itching curiosity, and was read with disappointment".[28]

CONCLUSION

Summers's extant correspondence is scattered and insubstantial, and makes it hard to get a full picture of his life. From the historian's point of view, then, he is a problematic figure. Despite his vague reputation as a black magician and dabbler in the dark arts, little evidence exists to support the notion of Montague Summers being anything other than an eccentric author. He may have genuinely believed in the reality of the outré topics he wrote about, but his activities never reached beyond the academic and intellectual. His connection with Crowley was tangential at best, he didn't practise the occult, and his energy went into publishing, not magic. His writing was as concerned with non-occult subjects – particularly early British theatre – as with vampires, witches and werewolves. His outwardly projected life saw him occupying the role of priest/magician. This was the life he made available to the public. His inner life was that of an author, wrestling with the mundane demands of such an occupation, his editors, and his own health. It's one that any struggling writer would recognise. He hustled for more assignments, had to live with an erratic income, and felt he knew best about how his work should be promoted. This is the genuinely occult aspect of the life of Montague Summers, and it's what he should be remembered for.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

BRIAN REGAL teaches the history of science at Kean University, New Jersey, USA. He is the author of *Searching for Sasquatch: Crackpots, Eggheads, and Cryptozoology* (Palgrave, 2013), and has written for FT and spoken at UnConvention.

NOTES

1 JHH, "Review of *The Werewolf*," *Man* 203-205, Nov 1934, pp182-183.

2 Montague Summers to EJ Dent, 16 July 1944, Archives Centre, King's College Cambridge.

3 Trinity College Room Registry, and Trinity College Archive, Oxford, *School Registry Book* (n.d.): 185.

4 Discussion with Trinity College archivist Clare Hopkins, along with her *Trinity: 450 Years of an Oxford College Community* (OUP 2005), and Humphrey Carpenter, *O.U.D.S: A Centenary History of the Oxford University Dramatic Society* (OUP 1985).

5 Records of Litchfield College, Litchfield Records Office, admission register, D76/1/1. Thanks to Staffordshire Record Office archivist Andrew George.

6 The document making Summers a deacon is in the Georgetown University collection.

7 For Summers' extensive bibliography see Timothy d'Arch Smith, *Montague Summers: A Bibliography* (Aquarian Press, 1983). Mr d'Arch Smith was kind enough to answer some of my questions on locating Summers's correspondence, for which I am grateful.

8 *Letters to an Editor: Montague Summers to CK Ogden,* p14.

9 Kegan Paul to Montague Summers,26 June 1934. Kegan Paul Archive (KPA), University of Reading, UK.

10 Montague Summers to Kegan Paul, 14 July 1934. KPA.

11 Montague Summers to Edward Wagenknecht, 8 Nov 1937, Montague Summers Correspondence, folder MA4926, JP Morgan Library.

12 Montague Summers to Kegan Paul, 21 July 1934. KPA.

13 Montague Summers to Edward Wegenknecht, 20 Jan 1938, Montague Summers Correspondence, folder MA4926, JP Morgan Library.

14 Montague Summers to Kegan Paul, 5 Nov 1935. KPA.

15 Montague Summers to Kegan Paul, 15 July 1935. KPA.

16 Montague Summers to Kegan Paul, 17 July 1935. KPA.

17 Kegan Paul to Montague Summers, 11 Aug 1936. KPA.

18 Kegan Paul to Montague Summers, 25 Nov 1936. KPA.

19 Montague Summers to Kegan Paul, 27 Nov 1936. KPA.

20 Montague Summers to Kegan Paul, 28 Dec 1936. KPA.

21 Kegan Paul to Montague Summers, 29 Dec 1936. KPA.

22 Summers, *The Supernatural Omnibus*, p9.

23 Summers, *The Galanty Show*, p155.

24 Joseph Jerome (Brocard Sewell), *Montague Summers: A Memoir*, Cecil & Amelia Woolf, London, 1965, p.81.

25 CR Cammell, *Aleister Crowley: The Black Magician*, New English Library, 1969, p95.

26 Thanks to Dr Henrik Bogdan, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

27 Lance Sieveking, *The Eye of the Beholder*, Hulton Press, 1957, p.252.

28 Summers, *The Galanty Show*, p242.

A GREAT WAY TO FIGHT POVERTY FROM CARE INTERNATIONAL UK

Analyn's small shop will provide an income for her young family

🟦 Raised: **£30.00**
🟧 Needed: **£82.86**

Jose is a farmer who needs a loan to cultivate his land

🟦 Raised: **£680.00**
🟧 Needed: **£1476.86**

WHOSE LIFE WILL YOU CHANGE WITH AN INVESTMENT OF JUST £15?

At CARE International, we know that sometimes, all people need is a little investment to change their lives forever.

That's why we've set up this revolutionary new way to help some of the world's poorest people. It's called lendwithcare – and instead of giving a donation, you can lend from just £15 to fund a fledgling business.

Analyn Abarico and Jose Armijos are just two of the people you could help to work their way out of poverty when you make a loan through lendwithcare.org.

How does it work?

1. You choose an entrepreneur at **www.lendwithcare.org**
2. You invest any amount from £15 in their business
3. The entrepreneur's business beings to grow
4. Your loan is repaid back to you
5. You re-invest in another entrepreneur, you withdraw your money or donate it to CARE International

VISIT LENDWITHCARE.ORG NOW TO MEET MORE ENTREPRENEURS AND DECIDE WHO YOU INVEST IN

lendwithcare.org
Microloans from CARE International UK

care
Defending dignity. Fighting poverty.

CARE International UK. Registered charity no 292506. CARE, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TP
The loan status and amounts required were correct at the time of creating this advertisement.

MAKE A LOAN – CHANGE A LIFE

STRANGE STATESMEN #17

EAST IS BEST AND WEST IS BEAST

In the second part of his survey of contemporary Russian ultra-nationalism, **SD TUCKER** discovers that when geopolitics and Gnosticism collide, what results is a bad case of the Evola virus.

Last issue, we saw how Russia's governing elite have helped create a series of cartoonish far-right pseudo-politicians like Vladimir Zhirinovsky who are always making empty threats of nuclear warfare against foreign 'enemies' at the drop of a hat, hoping thereby to divert the country's substantial nationalist vote into harmless channels. Scarily, however, another even more extreme figure named Aleksandr Dugin now appears to have the ear of President Vladimir Putin (he has been called "Putin's Rasputin"), and Dugin's desire to instigate Armageddon appears more sincere. Whilst he has been a noteworthy figure in Russia for many years, when Dugin first began making headlines in the West around 2014 in his capacity as the alleged ideologue behind Putin's expansionist foreign policy in eastern Ukraine, the oddness of some of his ideas to occidental eyes saw him labelled as everything from a mad professor to the leader of a Satanic cult. In fact, Dugin is what is termed in Russia a 'Eurasianist', an idea having its origins in the work of men like Lev Gumilev (1912-1992), a polymath who developed the concept of 'passionarity', which held that each race on Earth had a different level of life-force, will-power and energy which was determined partly by landscape and expressed through strength of ethnic identity. For example, the Russians, Slavs and central Asians derived their high levels of passionarity partly from life on the endless Eurasian steppe, whose vast expanses of grass contained concentrated solar energy which worked its way up the food-chain, helping give them a strong sense of *volk* and vigour. The delicate Western nations, however, with their artificial modern ways, were declining in passionarity and thus doomed, Gumilev said, meaning that Russia had to look south, imitating the vibrant and colourful Muslim populations of the Arab world, who were absolutely full of beans. Various thinkers had already primed the way for such ideas in the 1920s, arguing that Russia is more of an Asian civilisation than a European one, and that it should hence come to dominate the entire Eurasian landmass from Baltic to Pacific.[1]

SPUTNIK / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

LEFT: Eurasianist thinker Aleksandr Dugin, complete with Rasputin beard. **BELOW:** Lev Gumilev in 1934.

HE HAS CALLED FOR FASCISM TO BE ESTABLISHED THROUGHOUT A WIDER RUSSIA

A GREMLIN IN THE KREMLIN

In 2002, Dugin founded his Eurasia Party, dedicated to promulgating such notions, but his political journey up to this point was long and complex. In the 1980s, he was an anti-Communist dissident, yet he frequently praised the rule of Stalin. At other times, Dugin has self-identified as a fascist, calling for a truly "fascist fascism" to be established within a new, wider Russia, stretching from Dublin to Vladivostok. Dugin was a devout member of the Amish-like 'Old Believers' sect, and perhaps his most apt description of himself is as a "conservative revolutionary" with a profoundly nationalist bent. He has praised Vladimir Putin, claiming his opponents are "mentally ill", whilst at the same time criticising his master for not going far enough in terms of conquering the Eurasian landmass; the 'good' Putin he calls 'Solar Putin', and the 'bad' 'Lunar Putin'. Like the Kremlin, Dugin is obsessed with the idea of Western-backed fifth columnists infiltrating the country and spreading alien concepts like gay parades, rock concerts and democracy. Human rights, he says, are a "culturally racist" notion, imposed by Western neo-imperialist metropolitan elites upon unwilling subject-peoples (including their own), an argument that has also been tried by hard-line Islamists. Also like certain Islamists, Dugin has been accused of wanting to bring about the end of the world through sparking off global warfare. He has called for the Internet to be banned (even though he makes good use of it to spread his doctrine) and has branded physics and chemistry as "demonic" sciences, mere tools of Western domination. Privileging mysticism over logic, the long-bearded sage prefers alchemy. Throughout the 1990s, Dugin published two magazines devoted to his twin hobbies of occultism and extremism, named *Elementy* and *Dear Angel*, dealing with conspiracy theories, the metaphysics of fascism and suchlike. *Dear Angel* went five years between issue one in 1991 and issue two in 1996, but made up in influence what it lacked in selling power. In any case, fans frustrated by the wait could always buy one of his many weird books, issued by the Arktogeia firm, whose name echoes Dugin's apparent sympathy with the old Ariosophist idea that the white Aryan (or, for Eurasianists, Slavic) master race came from the frozen Arctic (or Siberian) north. Another similarity between Dugin and Islamists, meanwhile, is his portrayal of America as the 'Great Satan'; in 1992, *Elementy* featured a cover-reprint of the French occultist Eliphas Lévi's famous Goat of Baphomet figure, with a caption labelling it the 'New World Order' created by US hegemony in the post-Soviet world. To slay the Great Beast, Dugin has proposed Russia should join with Islamist regimes like Iran in an axis of opposition to modernity itself; as, indeed, it currently has done.[2]

Obviously, Putin himself isn't allied with Tehran for metaphysical reasons. However, the practical *realpolitik* of Putin and the occult nationalism of Dugin do have clear crossover points, making Dugin a useful propaganda tool for the Kremlin to enlist. Dugin has a high web-profile in Russia, being easily able to mobilise his support-base to march under the Eurasianist banner of eight golden arrows arranged like the directions of a compass on a black background (actually an occult symbol invented by the British novelist Michael Moorcock, 'The Star of Chaos') in support of Putin's wars. By claiming the present Ukrainian conflict was "inevitable" and then spreading a distasteful modern blood-libel concerning the imaginary crucifixion of a six-year-old boy by Ukrainian militants, Dugin has inspired some of his most fervent disciples to go and fight for Russia abroad. In 2014, Dugin even abused his position as Head of Sociology at Moscow State University to call for the mass slaughter of Ukrainians: "Kill them, kill them, kill them! … As a professor, I consider it so." [3] Due to such statements, some have suggested that Dugin is mad and now out of control. If so, then the Kremlin should have been forewarned, for such a thing has happened to them before. During the creation of pseudo-democracy in the 1990s, it was decided that some fake right wing parties were needed to make the sham look more realistic. Dugin, as the coolest fascist in town, was asked to get involved, being given newspaper-columns and slots on the radio. Following 2004/05's pro-Western 'Orange Revolution' in Ukraine, Dugin was tasked with creating the Eurasian Youth Union (EYU), a kind of Situationist street-gang who modelled themselves upon Ivan the Terrible's feared state enforcers, the *oprichniki*. The Kremlin actually considered the EYU a new, advanced form of military technology, termed 'network structures'. In their view, the flash-mob crowds of Orange revolutionaries in Ukraine had been developed by the Pentagon to cause unrest and revolution in response to media cues. So, for example, when the EYU began gang-stalking the British Ambassador Tony Brenton, it was not as if Putin had to give a speech telling them to do so; web-posts and insider-agitators primed them to do it, allowing the Kremlin to deny all knowledge.[4] Wanting to swell the ranks of such troops, Vladislav Surkov, Putin's top spin-doctor, made the naive decision to arrange a mass-rally in 2005 to which many of the country's real skinheads were invited, in the hope they too would fall into line. Unfortunately, as these gangs were headed by disobliging men like Alexander Belov, a far-right neo-pagan who claims to have invented a sort of psychic kung-fu (**FT148:30-33**), the event slid into chaos. With so many *Sieg Heils!* and Hitler salutes being thrown around, it was almost like attending a *real* neo-Nazi rally, not a sanitised imitation of one. [5]

ВЫ НИКОГДА НЕ БЫЛИ
PROPERTY OF USA

DENIS SINYAKOV / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

ALEXEY SAZONOV / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

ABOVE: Supporters of the ultra-nationalist Eurasian Youth Union in 2006; like radical Islamists, Eurasianists holds the USA to be the 'Great Satan'. **BELOW:** Alexander Belov, neo-pagan, martial artist and leader of the far-right Movement Against Illegal Migration.

MODERN LIFE IS RUBBISH

Surkov had bungled. Having opened Pandora's Box, it was now clear that far-right nationalism was a genuine force, and that men like Dugin could go it alone for real if they wanted. Instead, Dugin chose to stay close to the levers of power and try and influence the Kremlin from within. To judge by one 2007 interview, his master-plan is to transfer his soul into Putin's mind and possess it: "In my opinion, Putin is becoming more and more like Dugin… [He] is becoming less and less of a simulacrum and more and more real; the closer he comes to me, the more he finds himself. When he becomes 100 per cent Dugin, he will become 100 per cent Putin." [6] But what does Dugin want Putin to do, precisely? His thought falls into two basic stalls – geopolitical and occult. His geopolitics Dugin terms 'Neo-Eurasianism', which posits an archetypal clash between land-based civilisations, whose populations are stable, homogenous and committed towards tradition and public order, and maritime civilisations like Britain, America and Japan, whose capitalist drive to trade across the high-seas destroys tradition, making them unstable and committed towards ideas of individual liberty and sodomy. Any opposition to their liberalism they paint as an assault

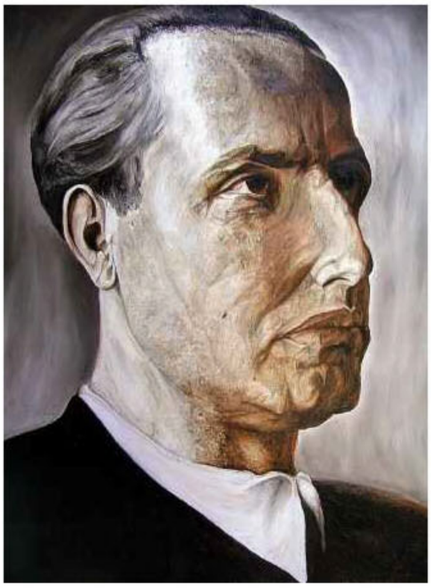
ANDREY SMIRNOV / AFP / GETTYIMAGES

ABOVE: Russian riot police detain a member of Dugin's Eurasian Youth Union (wearing the Eurasianist 'Star of Chaos' symbol) at a protest in Moscow. **BELOW:** Mussolini's fascist mystic, Julius Evola.

upon freedom even though, for Dugin, true freedom lies in submission (he really should convert to Islam).[7] Thus, to combat the forces of Atlantean 'Moon-people', from whom all Westerners are allegedly descended, Slavic-Aryan 'Sun-people' from the Arctic should join up in a giant unconquerable Eurasian 'World-Island' under Moscow's control and wage war upon the neo-Atlantean archipelago. In sane terms, this means recreating the territorial scope of the USSR and opposing the West, both militarily and culturally. Dugin's metaphysics, meanwhile, are dubbed the 'Fourth Political Theory', and claim to be based upon the views of Nazi philosopher Martin Heidegger; the basic thrust is that 'modernity' is a big scam, which views everything through the supposedly 'rational' lens of science, disregarding all spiritual or traditional knowledge as inadmissible to its worldview.[8]

In reality, however, Dugin's philosophy derives more from the ideas of the Italian fascist mystic Julius Evola (**FT191:40-45**), whose books, like *Revolt Against the Modern World,* also decry modern commercialism, liberalism, democracy and science. For Evola, large power blocs such as a Roman Empire or a Caliphate – or the USSR, in Dugin's mind – were better than independent nation states, which led only to the cancers of individualism and humanism. Inspired by the Gnostics and Eastern mysticism, Evola felt that spirit was superior to matter and that humanity had currently descended into a debased material end-point upon the Eternal Wheel, the *kali yuga*, following which the entire rotten edifice of modernity would be swept away and humanity be reborn into a new Golden Age.[9] According to the most alarmist interpretation, Dugin wants Putin to help this process along by engineering some gigantic East-West nuclear clash to trigger the Apocalypse. Certainly, it is easy to find scary quotes from Dugin like these: "The End Times and the eschatological meaning of politics will not realise themselves on their own... The End will never come if we wait for it... If [my philosophy] is not able to realise the End of Times, then it would be invalid... The meaning of Russia is... [to] realise the last thought of God, the thought of the End of the World... Death is the way to immortality. Love will begin when the world ends. We must long for it, like true Christians... We are uprooting the accursed Tree of Knowledge. With it will perish the universe... [my critics] fail to appreciate the positive significance of death."[10] Of course, a more moderate view of Dugin's influence might be that he is just a highly intellectual crank whom Putin uses to interact with and then influence other such cranks in extremist circles across both Russia and Europe,[11] exploiting them to destabilise his enemies whilst not giving a fig for the metaphysical uprooting of the Tree of Knowledge himself; but even so, Dugin's presence in the corridors of power is alarming.

“THE MEANING OF RUSSIA IS TO REALISE THE THOUGHT OF THE END OF THE WORLD”



Or is Dugin's *Finis Mundi* purely metaphorical? His real aim may actually be to destroy what he sees as being the excessive privilege currently afforded by the West to the pronoun 'I', denounced as being the basis of our entire evil Atlantean Moon-civilisation – to nuke our *worldview*, not our actual world. Another of Dugin's main influences is Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, which makes startling claims about the Russian soul. Westerners, Spengler says, look vertically up to the stars and develop a sense of 'I'. Russians look horizontally across the infinite steppe and develop a will-less soul, based upon the brotherhood of 'we', not the solipsism of 'me'. Thus, death for a Russian is an extension of this outlook, an "expanding of self, till [the 'I'] in the man becomes identical with the boundless plane itself."[12]

But, in life, could the horizontal Russian self not expand to merge seamlessly with wider society, and thus 'die' whilst still alive? Dugin's oft-stated wish for the world to descend into chaos could be understood, paradoxically, as a desire for total order; originally, 'chaos' referred to a sort of non-being, an infinite blackness before the material world was formed, and Dugin may wish mankind to return to a similar kind of mental non-being, free from the tyranny of occidental selfhood. Consider an oak-tree; it cannot desire to be what it cannot be, like a rose-bush, or do what it cannot do, like walk around. It just exists, automatically, and grows, in accordance with its own *telos* (or purpose). Animals and plants embody their own *telos*, as they can do nothing other; no lion awakes one day and decides to become a vegetarian. Modern Westerners, though, have such a highly-developed sense of 'I' that Dugin thinks it is now expanding to *consume* material reality itself, not merge with it; consider the current phenomenon of 'gender-fluid' people, men who think that, despite having a penis, the fact they 'self-identify' as women magically makes them into females. Free of the old boundaries of tradition, in a society based upon such infinite tolerance, our values and selves have no boundaries and thus will endlessly expand and one day end up consuming the whole of reality. For Dugin, people like Eddie Izzard embody the chaos of excessive self-hood, a negative chaos which should be hijacked and dissolved into a sense of total Russian-style brotherhood, in which every individual lives within a society so cohesive that we become like animals, acting

ABOVE: Oleg Orchikov, leader of the pagan warriors of the Svarog Battalion.

in a way which automatically embodies our own civilisational *telos*, fulfilling roles as natural and blissfully inescapable as a woodpecker pecking wood. The death of the self need not be physical; rather than eating reality, the self could be consumed entirely within that of the *volk* or proletariat, in a modern serfdom we all would accept happily and gratefully, like drones in a hive, a dictatorship so total it becomes impossible to reject or even to *desire* its rejection. Or, then again, seeing as none of this is in any way practically achievable and stands as little more than a game of bizarre intellectual wordplay intended only for a tiny audience, maybe Dugin is just a mad Bond villain who wants to blow up the world for real. Because his thought is so contradictory, it is hard to tell; must be why he flies the flag of Chaos. [13]

SVAROG'S BARMY ARMY

But surely nobody would actually go to war for such ideas, would they? They already have. Amongst the rebel groups who took up arms fighting gay Orange fascists in eastern Ukraine during 2014 were an outfit of pagan Slavic warriors who called themselves the 'Svarog Battalion', after the native blacksmith-god Svarog, who forged the solar disc with his mighty hammer. Led by a local high-priest named Oleg Orchikov, the 1,200-strong militia set up a hidden shrine in woodland outside the rebel city of Donetsk, with carved posts bearing swastikas, and a ring of stones they termed their 'meta-universe'. Recruits were trained not only in combat but also in the hidden holy symbolism of the Cyrillic alphabet, and the 'true' course of world history, which was really one long chronology of forgotten Russian triumphs. Like all good Eurasianists, the vegetarian Svarogs see conflict in Ukraine as only the start of a wider war with all of the world's "un-people" which will ultimately lead to the rebuilding [*sic*] of a sacred solar Russian Empire stretching from sea to shining sea. Refusing to believe that the homosexuals fighting them are their own Slavic kin, the Svarogs have created a convenient theory that all 'Ukrainians' who oppose them on the battlefield are really mincing foreign mercenaries – something which gives the Svarogs "full cosmic rights" to take up weapons, because the "rotten parasites and fascists and other scum" they will be killing are not truly people at all. Ukraine itself should not even really exist as an independent entity apart from Russia, they say, and is simply part of a wider "Jewish commercial project", as are 'gay' diseases like AIDS and ebola, and evil capitalist soft-drinks like Coca-Cola. Their knowledge of Evola and Dugin's doctrine of the *kali yuga*, meanwhile, is evident in statements such as the following, given by the group's leader, Orchikov: "Now we have a process of killing off, and then we will have a process of renewal. It's important to go through this killing off process first, because the cancerous cells have to die. This is the evolutionary road." That road appears blocked for now, though, as in November 2014 Orchikov was arrested by higher-ups in the separatist Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), with his troops being dispersed amongst other, more normal, battalions. This has led to a 'stab in the back' legend arising, centring upon an idea that the DPR tricolour is being deliberately flown upside-down with its black band at the top, not the bottom. Seeing as Donestk is a coal-mining city, the DPR should know that blackness is to be found underground, just as in Hell, not above, thus revealing that they are Satanists. Svarog loyalists therefore insist upon inverting the flag to represent the army of solar light – i.e. their fellow Eurasianists. [14] But what happens when the forces of 'light' don't win and, their purpose served, the Kremlin crushes them? Julius Evola's followers, once upon a time, resorted to terrorism, planting bombs in hope of triggering The End. Let's hope Dugin's disciples don't try anything similar. **FT**

NOTES

1 George M Young, *The Russian Cosmists: The Esoteric Futurism of Nikolai Fedorov and His Followers*, Oxford University Press, 2012, pp226-228; https://www.ft.com/content/ede1e5c6-e0c5-11e5-8d9b-e88a2a889797

2 Beatrice Glatzer Rosenthal (Ed.), *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture*, Cornell University Press, 1997, pp414-416; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksandr_Dugin

3 https://warisboring.com/putins-mad-philosopher-sacked-from-top-post-38c6d14b3a2; http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-28229785; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksandr_Dugin; http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/mind-games-alexander-dugin-and-russia%E2%80%99s-war-ideas; https://translate.google.co.uk/translate?hl=en&sl=de&u=http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-128101577.html&prev=search; http://crookedtimber.org/2015/03/10/who-is-aleksandr-dugin/

4 So successful did this prove that gang-stalking is now a standard psy-ops strategy used by the FSB (the new KGB) to unsettle foreign diplomats. Some FSB spooks shit on Westerners' carpets, or break in and move their furniture around when they're out, so they think they're going mad or have a poltergeist. Such tactics were previously favoured by the Stasi, who performed such seemingly trivial acts as replacing a victim's teabags with another brand, or turning their paintings around to face the wall. Putin's aim is to cause staffing shortages in Western embassies as diplomats quickly tire of the disruption and quit. See https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/sep/23/russia-targeting-western-diplomats; http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3662507/Breaking-homes-assassinating-dogs-DEFECATING-carpets-criminal-bizarre-lengths-Russian-agents-intimdate-diplomats-Europe-report-claims.html

5 Charles Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow: The Rise of Russia's New Nationalism*, Yale University Press, 2016, Ch 13.

6 Cited in Clover, *op cit*.

7 Although I suspect Dostoyevsky-fan Dugin has actually been reading the famous dialogue about free will between the returned Christ and the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov* rather than the Koran here.

8 http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/mind-games-alexander-dugin-and-russia%E2%80%99s-war-ideas

9 Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity*, New York University Press, 2002, pp52-71

10 http://www.nationalreview.com/article/380614; several quotes are conflated here.

11 The Kremlin helps out various right-wing anti-EU parties, hoping to break the bloc up and gain relief from Brussels-enforced economic sanctions, and Dugin has close links with some of these groups.

12 Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West (Abridged Edition)*, OUP, 1991, pp161, 270-275; Spengler's ideas appear to be based largely upon a reading of Dostoyevsky.

13 This is partially my own analysis, and partially based upon the analysis (as I understood it, anyway) of the Croatian philosopher Branko Malic, online at http://21stcenturywire.com/2016/05/31/a-critique-of-alexander-dugins-4th-political-theory-agianst-the-gnostics/; I have no background training in philosophy, however, and am willing to be corrected! Malic sees Dugin as following an evil branch of Gnosticism called the 'Left-Hand Path', which is ultimately synonymous with Satanism, and seeks to "dissolve body, soul and mind into an animal, sub-animal, vegetable, sub-vegetable, mineral and finally non-mineral world of absolute deprivation" – something akin to Hell.

14 *Times*, 27 September 2014; http://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/the-rise-and-fall-of-eastern-ukraines-all-pagan-battalion-513; http://www.eastonline.eu/en/east-62/the-pagans-are-back; https://meduza.io/en/feature/2016/03/07/locked-up-in-the-donbas; there is no evidence to link Dugin directly with the Svarogs, most of whom came from the 'Rodnovery' (Slavic pagan faith) community, but given what they believe it is obvious they subscribe to some variant of Dugin's basic Eurasianist creed. Orchikov is still behind bars, but some pagans do sit in the DPR parliament, where they have shown an admirable interest in consumer-rights issues.

THE HIEROPHANT'S APPRENTICE PRESENTS

BUILDING A FORTEAN LIBRARY

17. A NEW VIEW OVER ALBION

One of the most famous and influential epiphanies in the history of forteana occurred in England almost a century ago. As John Michell tells it, amateur archæologist and pioneer photographer Alfred Watkins was riding in the hills above Bredwardine, Herefordshire, when "at that moment he became aware of a network of lines standing out like glowing wires all over the surface of the country, intersecting at the sites of churches, old stones and other spots of traditional sanctity." Er, not quite. No one is entirely sure where or when the horse entered the story, unless it trotted out of Michell's fancy, but it wasn't at Bredwardine. On 30 June 1921, Watkins was at Blackwardine, 20 miles (32km) away to the east, and probably sitting in his car, when (as he wrote) he was "led… to note on the map a straight line starting from Croft Ambury, lying on parts of Croft Lane past the Broad, over hill points, through Blackwardine, over Risbury Camp, and through the high ground at Stretton Grandison, where I surmise a Roman station." So, just one line, then. He found later hilltop surveys and mapwork "yielding astounding results in all districts, the straight lines to my amazement passing over and over again through the same class of objects, which I soon found to be (or to have been) practical sighting points." Watkins did not call these alignments ley lines, just plain leys, and he was sure they marked the dead-straight routes of ancient trackways. *Leylines* are something else altogether, as we shall see, and as we do so, perhaps catch the distant whir of Watkins twirling in his modest crypt. Watkins presented his initial findings to the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club in Hereford the following September, and in 1922 this lecture, much expanded, was printed as a 52-page pamphlet, *Early British Trackways*. In 1925, he published his fully assembled argument in *The Old Straight Track*. In neither of these does he mention "a network of lines standing out like glowing wires all over the surface of the country". Given what over-active minds have done with his work since, it is both suitable and ironic that the bright birth of Watkins's insight should have become shrouded in fiction and inaccuracy.

The Old Straight Track is as cautious as it is thorough in laying out Watkins's thesis. He stresses, time and again, that his ideas amount to "surmise", for the trackways he discerned have no written history – they were made by pre-literate Palæolithic people and, he believes, the system was already in decay well before the Romans turned up and started laying their famously straight-legged roads. So he was obliged to rely on the physical evidence on the ground, plus what might be derived from place names *en route*, and such literary fossils as he could find. He also devotes a chapter titled "Objections" to his critics, and does his best to counter them. One such is that the old tracks have a cavalier disregard for mountains, going straight up and down them, rather than skirting them for a less taxing trip. But Watkins points out that the hunter-gatherer peoples that we know today don't have the problems we might with steep hills. He might have added, but didn't, that surveying the track in the first place would have been far easier without having to include such deviations, and reconnections with the 'main line'. Nor was care for one's steed a consideration: the horse wasn't domesticated in Britain until roughly 2500 BC. Even then, the tough native breeds should have been able to cope with most of the gradients involved.

From place names Watkins developed an idea of what use the ancient tracks served. In particular, leys that frequently featured names including 'white' (or its derivatives) he proposed were routes for fish, tin, and salt – which also had its own subsets of revealing names – while 'red' routes were potters' trading paths. 'Black' or 'cole' and its relatives indicated blacksmiths' and charcoal-carriers' routes or, beguilingly, the ways taken by the ashy-faced men who tended the beacons that Watkins found had been dotted along the leys. Even more beguilingly, he found otherwise baffling moated tumps and ponds along the lines, which he interpreted as designed to reflect the beacons' lights, and keep the traveller correctly oriented on low or descending ground.

Watkins's term 'ley' likewise came in part from place names. Most latterday writers mention that the word means 'clearing' or 'meadow', but then leave the matter there, a dangling enigma. Watkins's thought went somewhat deeper. "The sequence seems clear," he writes: "first, the straight, sighted track, then a clearing of the woodand [as a waymark], through which it passed, then the fields which evolved in the clearing, the same name ley, lay, lee, applying to each stage, a logical sequence." But he notes islands, lakes, rocks, hills, bridges, wells, farms, fens, and moors that are named 'ley', and that (the beacon connection again) an obsolete word 'leye' means flame, blaze, or fire. "The fact [is] that word elements in a large number of place names are derived, not from the characteristics of the place, but of the track on which it is situated..." And he observes: "The 'straight' meaning of ley is indicated by the fact that to 'lay' a gun in artillery is to aim it. Also that the batten of a loom is called a 'lay', and the crossing of the threads is called the 'lease'..." So Watkins adopted the word, "rightly or wrongly" as he says, for the old straight track.

Watkins identified leys by looking

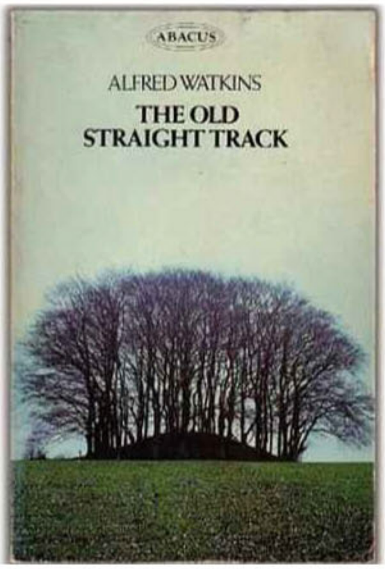
for mounds, solitary megaliths and stone circles, ponds and pools, notches on hillsides, trees, camps (earthworks), beacon hills and churches that lay in a straight line. He included churches because so many of them have been built over ancient shrines; a few still have megaliths standing forlornly in their yards. He recognised that some parts of the country are so crowded with ancient works that picking any four at random would provide a straight line; and remarks that he was fortunate that they were sparse in the Welsh Marches where he mostly worked. Watkins believed that if a minimum of four of these markers aligned, one could declare a ley. Unfortunately, he doesn't say within what distance one should find these four tell-tales – and there must be some practical limit, or random statistics will kick in. But he gives enough detail of leys that he found within various limited localities to convince that he was on to something.

He is also weak, it seems to us, when he cites literature in his own support, especially the Bible. Expressions involving straight and crooked paths in the Good Book are almost always metaphorical, no matter how one speculates about desert travel and camel trains in days of yore. He is much stronger in adducing straight roadways that have been found abroad. But he does make one go "Hmmm…" at the conclusion of his chapter on *Pilgrim's Progress*: "It is very plain that the 'inspired tinker' got the 'straight way' and the beacon light from the Bible direct. But the causeway through pond or slough [Watkins found several of these], the steep track straight up the hill, the refreshing well on the path, the 'ascent' or sighting mound artificially 'cast up' and the pleasure fair, all spring from his own land, and are folk memory of the old straight track in England. And a careful reading of the earliest part of the journey will show that from the start point, the pond, the causeway through it, the wicket gate and the beacon light beyond, are all made by Bunyan to sight up in one straight line."

Watkins is quite unsentimental about his tracks. He wonders if a warming climate and increased afforestation were a factor in their decay, and recognises that "the old tracks were not suddenly abandoned, but divergencies made, here to go aside to a homestead, there to avoid a wet bottom, again to get round a rocky climb. New tracks were made from homestead to village, and they had to wind round the edges of the enclosures that had come into being. These same enclosures would certainly be bounded by the old straight tracks, and the old mark stones thus became boundary stones. In this way evolved the 'reeling road' or sometimes the broken or serpentine road based on the old straight track, but constantly getting away from it, and again back to it." He is also quite open about the question of which came first – the burial mounds, wells, megaliths and associated shrines, and so on, or the tracks that linked them; but where people can travel easily, and especially where paths cross, they will tend to gather, and for any number of reasons, be it for a fair or a funeral or to flog some pottery.

"NO TWO PERSONS EVER READ THE SAME BOOK."

Edmund Wilson



We'll mention in passing that in 1936, Xavier Guichard, a senior French police officer, philologist and archæologist, published *Eleusis Alesia: Enquête sur les origines de la civilisation européenne*, on whose argument he had been working since 1911. This proposed a network of aligned cities joined by straight tracks and roads, centered on the ancient site of Alaise (near Besançon in southern France), whose waymarks most often featured landscaped hills overlooking rivers or briny wells. Guichard believed this to be an elaborate system of meeting-points, with the routes also being used to transport salt and other commodities. He was apparently unaware of Watkins's work, as his was unknown to Watkins. Neither man construed the patterns they saw in the landscape in other than essentially mundane, materialist terms.

According to John Michell (whom one is sometimes inclined to regard as England's answer to John Keel), *The Old Straight Track* created a furore among professional archæologists, who objected to it mainly on the grounds that the ancient Brits didn't have the necessary surveying skills, and that there were so many of what Watkins took to be waymarks in the UK that anyone could find a 'ley' almost anywhere. Watkins had answered the latter point already, and pointed to evidence that strongly suggests that surveying was an ancient if esoteric art. The patronising attitude to supposedly knuckle-dragging Palæolithicals is not so distant from the contemporary ancient-astronaut fans who conceive that only aliens in flying saucers, following ley *lines* infused with mysterious unidentified and unidentifiable 'energies', can have constructed the leys.

That rot really set in in the 1960s, by which time (if we may quote ourselves), "leys had become 'leylines', and were variously interpreted as lines of occult force (an idea hatched by Dion Fortune in the 1936 novel *The Goat-Foot God*); or magnetic lines in the ground facilitating the trajectories of UFOs (originated by Tony Wedd in a 1961 pamphlet, *Skyways and Landmarks*); or dowsable lines of mysterious unspecified 'energies'. This last was first proposed by Arthur Lawton in a 1939 pamphlet, *Mysteries of Ancient Man*, and has been reprised many times since: for most people today it is the default interpretation of the term 'leyline'…" (**FT280:53**). This is what sceptics always address, not Watkins's conception. John Michell's *Flying Saucer Vision* (1967) and *The View Over Atlantis* (1969) dragged the saucers into the New Age along the leylines; and then came the dowsers. In *The Ley Hunter* 113 (1991), veteran dowser Tom Graves – admitting that "some of this is my fault" – laid into 'energy dowsers' with some gusto: "Some of the new stuff I've seen, particularly in the States, is unbelievably bad: garbage about 'Dodmasters' and 'crystal energy nodes' and the rest, with the worst excesses of the New Age – its mindlessness, its elitism, its intellectual (and other!) laziness, its crass 'instant enlightenment' – displayed for all to see. And yet this rubbish is in print, and will stay in print for years to come, to be misquoted again and again as 'fact', like the fallacious fable of Alfred Watkins' 'Bredwardine vision'." As Graves put it: "This isn't Earth Mysteries research: it's 'newage' (it rhymes with 'sewage'), in a pure, undiluted form. Can we cut out this crap, once and for all?"

The chorus from the vulgar generality, sadly, was *No*. Out of all this came such factitious constructions as the Eltanin Antenna (**FT183:42-46, 184:50-54**), Harmonic 33, and the like, not to mention the creepy 'healing the Earth' brigade. We hope Alfred Watkins rests in peace, nonetheless, for we do believe he really was on to something – and it wasn't flying saucers.

Alfred Watkins, *Early British Trackways*, Watkins Meter Co (Hereford); Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co (London), 1922; also available from www.ancient-wisdom.com/alfredwatkinslecture.pdf

The Old Straight Track, Methuen 1925 (Abacus 1974, with introduction by John Michell dated 1970)

www.thedarkpath.co.uk

FOLLOW THE DARK PATH INTO A WORLD OF DRUIDIC LORE AND CELTIC MYTHS

SOLVE PUZZLES FROM FORGOTTEN RESEARCH

EXPLORE THE ANCIENT WOODLAND WHERE PEOPLE DISAPPEAR

ENCOUNTER PAGAN SHAMANISTIC WITCH POSSESSIONS

RE-ENACT CORNISH MYTHOLOGY

EXPLORE MYSTERIOUS BURIAL TOMBS OF THE NEOLITHIC

BARROW HILL

The Dark Path

12
www.pegi.info

PC DVD ROM

SHADOW TOR

ICEBERG INTERACTIVE

NOW AVAILABLE IN STORES AND ON STEAM

Barrow Hill: The Dark Path © 2016 Shadow Tor Studios. Developed by Shadow Tor Studios. Licensed worldwide to and published by Iceberg Interactive. The Barrow Hill and The Dark Path logo design are registered trademarks of Matt Clark. The Shadow Tor Studios logo design is a registered trademark of Shadow Tor Studios. Iceberg Interactive design and mark are registered trademarks of Iceberg Interactive B.V. Microsoft®, Windows® and DirectX® are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. All other brands, product names, and logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. All rights reserved. Made in the UK.

HAVE YOUR SAY

forum

The Horror in the British Museum

STEVE TOASE attends the first event organised by the growing Folk Horror Revival Group

STEVE TOASE has been working on *Haunt*, about the haunting presence of Harrogate in lives of people experiencing homelessness in the town. @stevetoase @Haunt_Harrogate

With books, Spotify playlists and a Facebook group numbering nearly 16,000 members, Folk Horror Revival is a growing presence. Any remaining doubts about the genre's popularity were laid to rest when an event called 'Otherworldly: Folk Horror Revival at the British Museum' sold out of all 350 tickets in two days. The event took place on 16 October, and upon registration each attendee was given a very smart enamelled badge, not only to gain access to the event but also to serve as a memento of the day.

The sessions began with Chris Lambert, curator of the Black Meadow project (blackmeadowtales.blogspot.co.uk) and compere for the day, performing the chilling poem 'Beyond the Moor'. Chris then introduced us to the disquieting folklore surrounding blackberry farming and bramble children. This visit to the darker side of the North Yorkshire Moors set the tone for the rest of the day. Where we were going was creative, mist-shrouded, spectral and entertaining.

It fell to Andy Paciorek (the founder and driving force behind the Folk Horror Revival group) and fellow admin Darren Charles to try and sum up what Folk Horror is. While they acknowledged the key triumvirate of *The Wicker Man*, *Blood On Satan's Claw* and *Witchfinder General*, both speakers emphasised the international nature of folk horror as a subgenre characterised by landscape, isolation, skewed morality and violent or supernatural events. The films and music discussed ranged from Japan to Denmark, reflecting the cross-cultural profile of the Folk Horror Revival Group.

Next up was Eamon Byers, talking about folk music in the 21st century. He explained how folk musicians often saw songs they played as the dead looking over their shoulders, and how the introduction of the phonograph created ghost voices.

LEFT: Andy Paciorek, founder of the Folk Horror Revival Group, and Darren Charles attempt to sum up what folk horror is all about.

In a nearby room there was a chance to see *Leasungspell*. Written by Bob Beagrie, this is an epic poem about Oswin travelling through the isolated countryside from Hartlepool to Whitby in the year 657. Bob performed the piece with real presence, the musical support from Sara Dennis, Dordeseal, Stewart John Forth and Peter Lagan enhancing the magic of the writing.

Next came John Pilgrim in conversation with leading light of psychogeography Iain Sinclair. Iain talked eloquently about British Museum artefacts swapping molecules, Arthur Machen, the fictive self's enhancement and his two recent walks, one following the route John Clare took after leaving Epping Forest asylum, recorded in Sinclair's book *Edge of the Orison* and the film *By Our Selves*, another a modern pilgrimage in honour of Edith Swan-Neck. His insights on these, and subjects such as meeting Michael Reeves, director of *Witchfinder General*, were worth the price of admission alone.

After a brief lunchtime visit to stare at the Star Carr antler headdress and the Folkton Drums in the museum's gallery 51, we returned underground. The afternoon session started with the first screening of Gary Parsons's new film. Shot in Pompeii, Avebury and Glastonbury, *Conjuration* is a non-linear exploration of magic as a neutral energy, with one of its main elements an Alexandrian ritual. Although not a final edit, the version shown was unsettling and haunting.

Staying with film, in 'Analogue Hauntings – The Ghost in the Grain' Adam Scovell talked about the analogue equipment associated with hauntings in drama (such as reel-to-reel tapes, oscilloscopes, thermogauges), before showing his two films, the MR James-inspired *Coastal Path* (my personal favourite), and *No Diggin' Here*.

James Riley spoke next about the uncanny stillness of the canal network. Accompanied by a beautiful slideshow of dark water and brickwork bridges, he explained how the isolation of these places creates a sinister atmosphere.

Gary Lachman brought us back to London with 'Colin Wilson and the Angry Young Outsiders', focusing on the writer's experiences in and connection with the capital. Gary's talk came with several reading recommendations, including Wilson's 1960 novel *Ritual in the Dark*, described as a cross between Jack the Ripper and *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Music and film came together in the first public screening of folk singer Shirley Collins's poignant video *Death and the Lady*, featuring the Mari Lwyd and the ossuary at Hythe in Kent. To finish the day, Shirley was joined on stage by Jim Peters (Folk Horror Revival admin, British Museum collections manager and tireless organiser of the event), Andy Paciorek, Darren Charles, writer and director Reece Shearsmith, and folk singer Sharron Krauss. The panel took questions on subjects such as the relationship between psychedelics and folk horror (for example, in the film *A Field In England*), what inspired the panel's relationship with folk horror (I was glad to see the 1977 Usborne *Mysteries of the Unknown* book get a mention), and the relationship between comedy and horror.

Otherworldly demonstrated the health of folk horror, how it continues to grow like a mist across a furrowed field, and how this very mistiness makes it hard to define the genre's boundaries

https://folkhorrorrevival.com/
https://www.facebook.com/groups/folkhorror/

Todmorden's 'lucky' dog

A West Yorkshire town found itself at the centre of a TV experiment involving a dog statue. As **JOHN BILLINGSLEY** explains, it was only lucky for some...

JOHN BILLINGSLEY has written on the folklore of Yorkshire and Japan. Closely involved with the earth mysteries and antiquarian scene for over 30 years, he edits a leading journal in that field.

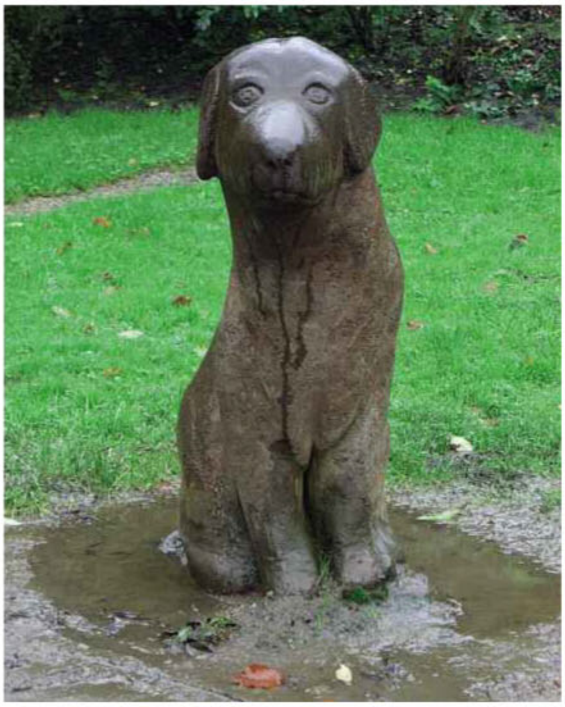
Todmorden, on the borders of West Yorkshire and East Lancashire, has acquired a reputation for weirdness, largely through a classic 1970s UFO/abduction (CE3) episode featuring a local policeman.[1] Was it this UFO story or something else that drew a Channel 4 TV project to the town in summer 2011, describing Todmorden as "a town that thrives on local mythology, tales of the supernatural, and constant rumours"?[2]

Nonetheless, people were a bit puzzled when a young woman with a camera crew visited the town over a period of several weeks, asking if anyone had heard that the statue of a dog in the local park was lucky, if you patted it. "No," they said, "Never heard that before." So the woman proceeded to tell them what she'd heard – how a family a year or so before had won the lottery soon after they patted the pooch, for instance; Sally Darlington had patted it and got the job she wanted; while Gina Hall won the bonus ball at a local pub competition and prizes in Blackpool arcades. Another couple had won three raffle prizes and organised a successful fashion show – all, they claimed, because of their show of affection to the dog, which was by now acquiring the obvious name 'Lucky'.[3]

So where did Lucky himself come from? He (quite definitely a 'he', as we'll see) is the creation of local sculptor David Wynne.[4] His website stated that the dog came about "as a quick life-size sketch carved from a block of expanded polystyrene. This was then cast directly into steel at the Todmorden foundry of Weir Minerals in a lost-wax type of process. It was donated to Centre Vale Park in Todmorden, and is installed next to the Memorial Gardens on the site of an old mansion, where it still sits today". The statue's creation was funded by Weir Minerals, initially as a retirement present for an employee. Though made around 2002, it was 2009 before the statue was set in the park, clear of the flood alleviation works going on in the interim.[5]

In August, local papers upped the ante on Lucky even further, and revealed that the young woman who had been spreading stories was Dawn Porter, who had come to investigate the stories of the lucky dog and to try and follow the fortunes of people who patted it; it was claimed that people had come to pat Lucky "from as far as Warwickshire" (130 miles).[6] Porter herself blogged: "Since patting the dog I have been almost searching for luck to come my way. I am expecting it. I want it. Before I patted Lucky, I am not sure I ever thought about it. Occasionally, I warn myself to stop setting myself up for disappointment, but then something will happen that makes me think that dog might have the powers it is famed for after all. Since patting it my career has taken a very sudden turn in a more positive direction by way of work I have been offered. As well as this I have bought five scratch cards and won at least my money back on all of them, and my boyfriend got a job in Australia which means I get free business class tickets to go out and be with him. How can I not think I am lucky after all that? On top of this some members of my film crew came out of a terrifying car crash on the M1 completely unharmed (they had touched the dog)".[7]

BELOW: The Todmorden dog sculpture made by David Wynne and christened 'Lucky'.

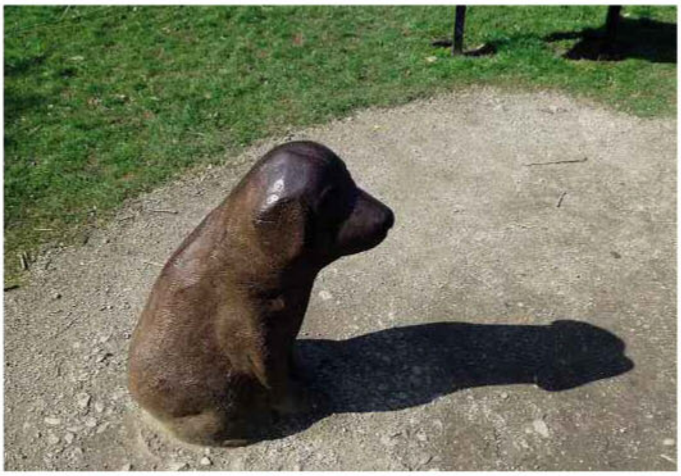


JOHN BILLINGSLEY

All this was news to Todmorden residents; but what with the UFO case and Mr Adamski on the coal-pile and the resulting persistent furore that led to Todmorden becoming media-famous as one of Britain's weirdest places, they were perfectly willing to take the latest oddity on board. Indeed, any bit of luck coming into a small post-industrial town is surely welcome. By Porter's second visit, the assiduously seeded rumour had evidently begun to take root. Tony the pagan craftsman, for instance, credited Lucky with his idea to carve and market Druidic ceremonial staffs. The camera which the TV team had surreptitiously installed in a tree overlooking the statue began to record a steady stream of visitors turning up to pat, even kiss, the dog on the head, kneel down and give it a stroke, and so on. By the time my wife and I got there on 11 October, a ditch had been trodden into the rather boggy grass area by the stream of visitors and Lucky was surrounded by a kind of muddy moat.

The luck reports continued for the three months that Porter was in town, interviewing and filming locals. One, Sue Landale, landlady at Jack's House, patted the dog and an hour or so later encountered the comedian Jason Manford with a flat tyre near her pub. She helped him sort it out, and he thanked her by doing a free gig at the pub, which proved lucrative.[8] Jason himself patted the dog before the gig, and met Dolly Parton days later.[9] This was a classic silly-season story, and it was being milked well. A psychic, Sally Morgan, was invited in, and talked of "a vortex of energy" surrounding the dog, the kind of language that had been bandied about in post-CE3 chatter about the town.

It was in September that the real star of the TV programme came to town – publicly, at least. The project was the fourth episode of Derren Brown's series *The Experiments*, and this instalment was "The Secret of Luck", described on his website as "an entire town finding itself the subject of an audacious social experiment to see what separates lucky from unlucky people".[10] He claimed he had only heard of the lucky dog through Porter via Twitter,[11] but it became obvious that this wasn't true; on this visit, he came clean – well, partially at least –



PHOTOS BY JOHN BILLINGSLEY

ABOVE LEFT: Lucky sitting by the remains of Centre Vale Mansion.

ABOVE RIGHT: On a sunny day, Lucky reveals a quite different disposition.

to readers of the local paper. [12]

All was revealed on 11 November, when the programme aired. [13] Yes, Porter came to Todmorden to plant the idea of a lucky dog, and no, there was no existing belief to Brown's knowledge. Manford's flat tyre was a set-up (though not the landlady's role), as doubtless was Porter's blog. That was the experiment; and the rumour implant was successful. The local newspaper, published the same day, was understandably peeved, having been duped into reporting deliberate misinformation. Their headline ran "the so-called lucky dog con trick" – because, as Brown himself admitted in the programme, that was pretty much what it was. [14]

The story continued to circulate, and the next January an online petition had been raised by a Lincolnshire woman, Elizabeth Mapleston, calling for signs to be erected and a path laid to the Lucky Dog, so people wouldn't get muddy.[15] By June, Lucky had acquired stepping-stones and hard-standing,[16] despite 'scathing' opposition from some town councillors.[17] A month later, a public picnic was held in his honour.[18]

So Todmorden had a new tradition, and was famous far and wide for something other than a policeman's alien encounter, and it was having a positive effect on town tourism and business. [19] All good, then; but maybe not.

As for the experiment, Derren Brown's aim was to demonstrate – in the end, persuasively – that luck is not some mysterious force 'out there', but all in the mind; and patting the dog made people feel lucky, so they were lucky. This was contrasted with the fortunes of a popular local butcher, Wayne Stansfield, a habitually pessimistic chap who, Brown seemed to show, was only missing out on luck because he didn't look for it. Maybe so – but Wayne had previously broken his hand when knocked over by a sheep and had been shot with an airgun in Todmorden town centre, along with other mishaps that he recalled on camera – he even says "I'm jinxed – is that the word?". [20] Nonetheless, with Brown's encouragement, he decided to trust his luck on the show, and won £5,000. The episode therefore ended on a positive and lucky note, pleased that it had created a new custom in the town.

However, the whole story had a heart-breaking sting in the tail; and sadly, almost inevitably, it was Wayne who was involved. On 17 March 2015, this likeable, friendly and self-deprecating man was run down and killed – not by one, but two cars, racing along the main road near his shop. In the light of this tragedy, for those aware of it, the programme is quite excruciatingly sad to watch. In the aftermath of Wayne's death the Lucky Dog Facebook page and its companion Twitter feed fell silent. And though people hesitated to voice it, there was definitely a sense in the town that this sad event had re-opened the question of whether luck really is, as Derren Brown claims, *all* in the mind. [21]

Lucky is still popular, frequently visited by passers-by, and people still do come from afar to pet him, as was evident in Facebook posts up until spring 2015. And I'm sure people feel positive afterwards, and might get positive feedback thereby. But how many of those giving him a pat or kiss on his head are aware of Lucky's little-known secret? Not even, it seems, his creator. As my photo shows, at certain times on a sunny day, Lucky is clearly identified as a 'he', in a way that makes one's relationship with him more intimate than expected. [22] FT

NOTES

1 See Jenny Randles 'Flappy Valley Pts. 1-4', **FT325:27, 326:27, 327:29, 328:28-30**.

2 Channel 4, 11 Nov 2011, 'The Secret of Luck' 6:58 mins.

3 *Halifax Evening Courier* (after *EC*), 29 Aug 2011; *Todmorden News* (after *TN*), 26 Aug 2011. More 'tales of luck' were aired on the TV programme.

4 Not the same David Wynne as the sculptor responsible for Boy with a Dolphin at Albert Bridge and Girl with a Dolphin at Tower Bridge in London, who died in 2014.

5 www.davidwynne.info: "Lucky Dog is renowned for bringing good fortune to anyone that gives him a friendly pat. He sits in Centre Vale Park, Todmorden, gazing at his beloved Whirlaw hillside". Why the employee never got the dog is unclear. David Wynne, pers.comm., 27 May 2016.

6 *TN*, 26 Aug 2011; *EC*, 29 Aug 2011.

7 www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/dawn-porter/is-there-such-a-thing-as-_2_b_923252.html. Dawn Porter is now known as Dawn O'Porter, following her marriage to Chris O'Dowd.

8 *EC*, 3+7 Sept 2011.

9 *EC* 7 Sept 2011.

10 http://derrenbrown.co.uk/on-tv/2011-2010/

11 *EC* 22+28 Sept 2011.

12 *TN*, 30 Sept 2011.

13 It won a BAFTA, and is still available (as of 18 May 2016) on 4OD, http://www.channel4.com/programmes/derren-brown-the-experiments.

14 *TN*, 11 Nov 2011.

15 *EC*, 11 Jan 2012.

16 *EC*, 23+26 Apr 2012.

17 *TN*, 14 June 2012.

18 *TN*, 26 July 2012.

19 *EC*, 17 Nov 2011; *TN*, 10 May 2012, 14 June 2013.

20 'The Secret of Luck', 13:00 & 8:00 mins. *EC*, 28 Sept 2011.

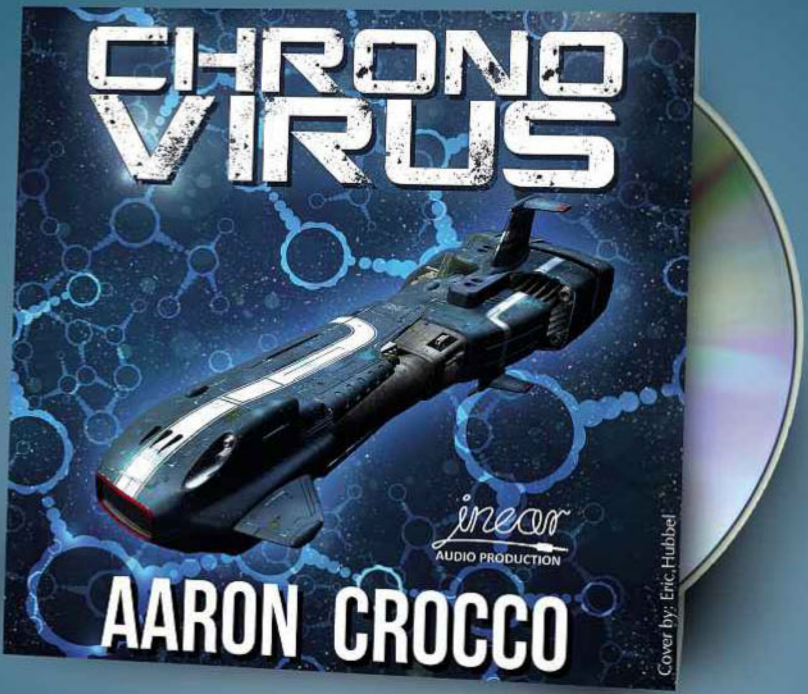
21 *EC*, 20 March 2015.

22 When I showed David Wynne my photographs, he assured me the phallic resemblance was unintended, and it had obviously not been pointed out to him; pers. comm., 27 May 2011. Folklorists, meanwhile, will surely want me to note that the erect phallus was a lucky talisman to the Romans, either as a portable amulet or as a carving, as at Chesters Bridge on Hadrian's Wall.

Fortean Times THE WORLD OF STRANGE PHENOMENA | SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

FREE CHRONO VIRUS AUDIO BOOK

when you subscribe



Your Phenomenal Offer

- Get your first **3 issues for £1**
- Exclusive **FREE Chrono Virus audio book,** written by **Aaron Crocco** and read by **Osian Edwards**
- **SAVE up to 21%** on the shop price if you continue your subscription
- **FREE delivery to your door** before it hits the shops

SUBSCRIBE TODAY
quoting your offer code below

Call 0844 844 0049*

Visit dennismags.co.uk/forteantimes
or complete and return the form below

*Calls will cost 7p per minute plus your telephone company's access charge

Fortean Times
NORDIC GHOSTS
UNLOCKING THE CAGE
Fortean Times
THE BEAST OF BRAY ROAD
ROSWELL REVELATIONS
FAIRIES & FANCIES
Fortean Times
SHOCKING STORIES!
The ghost & the past

Fortean Times 3 TRIAL ISSUES ORDER FORM

☐ **YES! Please start my subscription to *Fortean Times* with 3 issues for £1 and my Chrono Virus audio book for FREE.** I understand that the first 3 issues of *Fortean Times* I receive are on a no obligation trial basis. If I choose not to continue my subscription I will miss out on updates on the world of strange phenomena. The trial issues and FREE gift are mine to keep, whatever I decide.

OR I am an existing subscriber. Please extend my subscription with this offer.

YOUR DETAILS:

Mr/Mrs/Ms Forename
Surname
Address

Postcode
Telephone
Mobile
Email Year of birth

CHEQUE & CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS: £39.98 FOR 12 ISSUES (SAVE 21%)

1 ☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to Dennis Publishing Ltd.

2 ☐ Please charge my: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMEX ☐ Debit (issue no. ☐)

CARD NUMBER START DATE EXPIRY DATE

SIGNED TODAY'S DATE

DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENT: £19.99 every 6 issues (SAVE 21%) – UK ONLY

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit DIRECT Debit

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the manager: Bank name
Address
Postcode

Account in the name(s) of

Branch sort code

Bank/Building Society account number

Originator's Identification Number

7	2	4	6	8	0

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society
Please pay Dennis Publishing Ltd. Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Dennis Publishing Ltd. and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)
Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

Dennis Publishing (UK) Ltd uses a layered Privacy Notice, giving you brief details about how we would like to use your personal information. For full details please visit our website **www.dennis.co.uk/privacy/** or call us on **01795 592 910**. If you have any questions please ask as submitting your details indicates your consent, until you choose otherwise, that we and our partners may contact you about products and services that will be of relevance to you via direct mail, phone, email and SMS. You can opt-out at ANY time via **ManageMyMags.co.uk** or **privacy@dennis.co.uk** or **01795 592 910.**

Gifts limited to first 100 orders. Please allow 28 days for delivery. UK only. This offer is limited to one offer per household.

Return this order to: Freepost RLZS-ETGT-BCZR,
Fortean Times, 800 Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park,
Sittingbourne ME9 8GU (NO STAMP REQUIRED)

OFFER CODE: P1511P

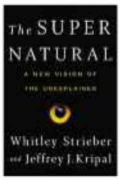
SEND REVIEW COPIES OF BOOKS TO: BOOK REVIEWS,
FORTEAN TIMES, PO BOX 2409, LONDON NW5 4NP, UK.

This month's books, films and games

reviews

Give me a place to stand

The vision of an historian of religion and an articulate abductee is hard to summarise: have they described a shift in psychology, a new consciousness or something else?



The Super Natural

A New Vision of the Unexplained

Whitley Strieber & Jeffrey Kripal

JP Tarcher Penguin 2016
Hb, 367pp, notes, ind, £26.97, ISBN 9781101982327

The topic of the nature of reality and its physical components is well attended by philosophers and the historians of science. It forms the basis of the highly successful progress of the physical sciences, so vital to modern life and our understanding of the world we live in because of its reliability and replication by mathematicians, physicists and engineers.

When it comes to reality's vague concomitant – the supernatural or paranormal (whatever they are) – there is almost a vacuum of discussion from the historians and philosophers of religion, psychology, sociology, etc, those whom you might think have a vested interest in knowing its nature and why it is such a persistent part of human experience and culture. What little 'official' interest is heavily blinkered by the scientific academy. To simply dismiss this vast and protean topic as irrelevant, or having no content worthy of scientific interest, doesn't sound like the sort of attitude scientists are supposed to have. Certainly some may have no interest, or are too busy to tackle the daunting job of sorting out any authentic data from the din of nonsense, misunderstanding, misrepresentation, falsehood and superstition… yet science did precisely this to become what it is today.

One academician taking an interest in this topic is Jeffrey Kripal, a philosopher and historian of religious thought at Rice University, with six books exploring claims of supernatural experience and their various relationships with science and society at a whole. In a bold and public step, Kripal is taking seriously the extraordinary experiences of Whitely Strieber – arguably "the most articulate of abductees" says Prof Joscelyn Godwin of Colgate University, another of these pioneers – and applying to Strieber's otherworldly encounters the full critical arsenal of a seasoned historian of religion.

Strieber's many books – from SF and 'horror' novels to the extraordinary *Communion* series chronicling his personal experiences of alien (in almost every sense of the word) entities – have been hugely successful commercially; but like it or not, they have, more significantly, provided a voice and rallying point for many thousands who have come forward claiming to have experienced similar disturbance of their everyday 'reality'. Collectively – as the work of Anthony Peake, Eddie Bullard, David Hufford, David Jacobs, Jenny Randles, Jerry Clark and the pioneering Jacques Vallee, to name a few, shows – these anomalous experiences have definite structure and consistency; strong flags for the attention of folklorists, sociologists and anthropologists, as well as historians of philosophy and religion. Strieber, for example, explains with moving honesty how his encounters with the Communion entity ranged from terror and danger, to sublime ecstasy and spiritual illumination, and became overlaid on his wife Annie with eroticism and a sense of the divine feminine.

> "They need a place to stand from which they can mount a non-prejudicial investigation"

These beg such questions as whether we have here an emerging religious movement, or possibly a shift in contemporary psychology, the emergence of a new type of consciousness… or stranger still, the eruption into the everyday world of some other plane of existence. It accomplishes nothing to dismiss any subject (especially one on this scale and with a ready canon of data), yet materialistic science seems incapable of assessing these questions, let alone investigating them usefully, unless there is a corresponding shift in the attitude of practical scientists.

What they need is to find "a place to stand", as Archimedes put it, from which to mount a non-prejudicial investigation. The history of science is a practical demonstration of how a paradigm shift – a jump to a new viewpoint – brings a renewed and enlarged science, leaving behind only what was erroneous, incomplete or "less inclusive" (as Fort called it). This is where this groundbreaking book comes in; it is nothing less than a brave attempt to reconnoitre the new territory to see whether there is "a place to stand".

Kripal acknowledges Strieber's honesty and intelligence; while the latter's alien encounters defy every aspect of materialistic reductionism, Kripal's careful assessment requires the reader to avoid the first great pitfall of thinking that 'skepticism' and belief are the only two options; rushing to judgment being the second. Strieber and Kripal alternate chapters: Strieber with his often painful revelations followed by Kripal's deconstructions. Kripal writes with an engaging sense of humour, providing clear explanations, with obvious excitement, a deliberate, sharp analysis and erudite historical and cultural comparisons.

As has been pointed out by Godwin (in his own review), "This dialogue between the famous abductee and the historian of religions *is the first major step in ufology* [my emphasis] since Jacques Vallee's writings of the 1990s". Reality and the imagination, notions about life and death, archetypes and the unconscious, and both religious and parapsychological phenomena are all brought into play with intelligence and openness, making "unavoidable parallels with initiatory states and certain mystical visions" and, inevitably, shamanism both modern and ancient. There is also a strong element of synchronicity and meaningfulness involved, striking directly to the heart of all the human expressive arts,

Continued on page 60

The alien owl service

Despite the books fascinating material on owl-like entities – or possibly possessed real ones – the thesis doesn't convince

THE MESSENGERS
OWLS, SYNCHRONICITY AND THE UFO ABDUCTEE
Mike Clelland

The Messengers

Owls, Synchronicity and the UFO Abductee

Mike Clelland

Richard Dolan Press 2015
Pb, 384pp, illus, notes, ind, £16.58, ISBN 9780967799575

Mike Clelland is a US-based outdoorsman and illustrator. His wide-ranging book describes strange experiences that he and others have had involving owls or owl-like forms, strange coincidences ('synchronicities'), and UFOs. Some, if not all, of the witnesses may have experienced 'alien abduction', but Clelland isn't satisfied with the traditional notion that the abducting aliens are extraterrestrial scientists who travel around in metal spaceships. He believes that "something far more bizarre and far more complex is going on".

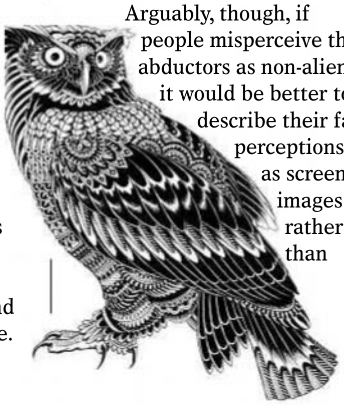
As for owl-related incidents, he starts by describing what happened to him and a female friend, Kristen, in the mountains near his home one night in the autumn of 2006. They were discussing spiritual matters, and there came a point when Clelland felt a strong and "hugely life affirming" connection with his friend. Right then, an owl swooped over them, followed by a second, and then a third. The owls flew over them silently for more than an hour. Days later, Clelland and Kristen were out at night in a different part of the mountains when three owls appeared and flew around them. They eventually landed on the ground nearby and stared at the couple.

A somewhat similar experience befell an informant called Cynthia. She and a friend were driving at night in Los Angeles when their conversation turned to God. Right then, an owl swooped low across their field of view, frighteningly close to the vehicle's windscreen. Cynthia noticed that the clock was reading 11:11. Clelland explains that this number has a curious way of showing up in connection with such odd events.

Another case involved a depressed woman who decided to kill herself. She was driving towards the place of her intended suicide when a large, snowy white owl appeared out of the darkness and flew towards her. She stopped her vehicle, and the owl hovered near the windscreen for 10 seconds or so, staring at her. She felt that she was being told to be patient, and that her life would improve. Consequently, she decided not to kill herself.

Believers in alien abduction have suggested that the entities responsible can influence victims' minds, substituting more palatable, conventional imagery (of deer or owls, for example) for what would otherwise be traumatic recollections of the abductors. These supposedly false recollections have been referred to as 'screen memories'. Clelland uses this expression, but in a way that applies both to abductees' recollections and what they experienced during the abductions themselves.

Arguably, though, if people misperceive their abductors as non-alien, it would be better to describe their false perceptions as screen images rather than memories.



Some of the cases cited in the book seem to have entailed apparitions of owls or the materialisation of owl-like entities. However, Clelland believes that other incidents have involved real owls. If so, it appears that these birds are sometimes taken over by some sort of higher intelligence and used as 'messengers' or symbols, perhaps because they have a well-established place in mythology.

Clelland attaches himself to no particular theory, but he believes that there are spiritual and paranormal forces at work in our lives; and he seems to believe that, in general, they're working for our long-time good. He's concluded that UFO-related abduction "is a spiritual path", although he concedes that alien abduction experiences can traumatise those involved (see, for example, pages 302–3). Many would regard his positive interpretation of the abduction phenomenon as mistaken.

The book is somewhat rambling and isn't entirely clear at all points. Furthermore, it contains typos, grammatical errors and some substandard punctuation. I also noticed problems with the index. The title page of my copy gives the year of publication as 2015, but the verso states, ambiguously: "Second edition in 2016, correcting minor errors and typos." Therefore, I'm not sure whether my copy is of the second edition, or whether a second edition is in the pipeline.

On the plus side, Clelland comes across as a sincere author, not averse to self-disclosure; and his case material is fascinating. I would recommend *The Messengers* to anyone with a serious interest in fortean phenomena.

Peter A McCue

Fortean Times Verdict

LOVELY TALES OF GUARDIAN OWLS, WHEREVER THEY COME FROM **7**

Continued from page 59

literature and symbolism.

Something is going on alright… elevating banal abductions and seedy pseudo-medical examinations in the direction of truly mystical experiences, but outside the mainstream of religious experience; modern echoes, perhaps, of St Teresa being pierced by a fiery spear of divine love or the psychophysical visionary dismemberments of archaic shamanistic initiation experiences. How can we presume there is only one form of 'the Natural', especially when, post-Heisenberg, we are told that our very act of observation changes our world? Our authors are careful to make a distinction between the 'supernatural' and the 'super natural'; the former being a belief and the latter an ontology that sits above, beside or is superimposed upon our everyday world. Given this density of exposition, it is very well written, surprisingly light and fast-paced… and seems to make sense.

As the pair dance with each other's ideas and reactions, they agree, from two different viewpoints, that this emerging, enigmatic gestalt is both playfully creative and powerfully dangerous. It needs new interdisciplinary methodologies to understand. They don't pretend to have answers, but we get the feeling the right questions lie in this direction. Every serious fortean needs to read it; understanding will come later.

Bob Rickard

Fortean Times Verdict

ESSENTIAL FORTEAN READING WEARS ITS ERUDITION LIGHTLY **9**

Birds

Myth, Lore & Legend

Marianne Taylor & Rachel Warren Chadd

Bloomsbury Natural History 2016
Hb, 304pp, illus, ind, bib, £19.99, ISBN 9781472922861

BIRDS
Myth, Lore & Legend

Does *Birds: Myth, Lore & Legend* strike the right balance between myth and natural history? This is a coffee table book, but yes. The background to different species is in-depth enough to inform, without losing the casual reader. The myths range from Irish beliefs that sparrows carried the souls of the dead to Australian aboriginal stories explaining the lyrebird's vocal gifts. Warren Chadd and Taylor include sections on subjects such as 'Eggs in mythology and religion', and 'Symbols in art'. It's unclear whether the main driver for inclusion was the bird species or its folklore, but *Birds* will appeal to both main target audiences. There are omissions. The book discusses the Tower of London ravens, but makes no reference to the supposed burial of the head of Bran the Blessed's (whose name supposedly means 'crow' or 'raven' in Welsh) under the White Tower. I found the index inadequate. For example, lapwing (a common British name for the Peewit) isn't listed. The bibliography is sparse, and the book might have benefited from references at the end of each section. However, this is a gorgeous volume, with enough myth to keep the birder fascinated, and enough natural history to intrigue folklorists.

Steve Toase

Fortean Times Verdict

GORGEOUS, AND APPEALING TO FOLKLORISTS AND TWITCHERS **9**

Conjuring Asia

Magic, Orientalism and the Making of the Modern World

Chris Goto-Jones

Cambridge University Press 2016
Pb, 338pp, £18.99, ISBN 9781107433823

Magic has always fired mankind's imagination, but the rise of industrial modernity is usually interpreted as a process of disenchantment.

Building on the writing and performances of the 'Golden Age magicians', Chris Goto-Jones shows how Western encounters with, and representations of, the Mystic East worked to re-enchant experiences of the modern world. Moving beyond what is 'real' magic and what is 'fake', Goto-Jones takes us on a magical mystery tour of Asia, showing us levitations and decapitations, magic duels and bullet catches, goldfish bowls and paper butterflies. Orientalism still casts a hypnotic spell.

Richard Thomas

Fortean Times Verdict

A TERRIFIC MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR OF MAGIC AND ORIENTALISM **8**

Bad Clowns

Benjamin Radford

University of New Mexico Press 2016
Hb, 289pp, illus, notes, bib, ind, PRICE? ISBN 9780826356666

That phrase "Is that a thing, now?" is useful in the US (which became a thing in 1776): it's shorthand for when a subject entered our collective culture. When did evil clowns become a thing? Benjamin Radford shows in his masterful survey that bad clowns have always been with us. We're surrounded by them, we invite them. We need them.

Bad Clowns is organised like other 'catalogue' books: all of them in literature, on screen, in song. But Radford tracks the over-sized footprints of bad clowns back to Greek drama and earlier. Codified in *commedia dell'arte* and popularised by Punch and Judy, the clown is the trickster figure in universal myth. Kudos to Radford for recognising silent film's Lon Chaney and his transitional translation of the bad clown for modern audiences. And then there are the real bad clowns. The jesters of royalty and the spammers of Internet? All are bad clowns. The criminals who disguise illicit intent with greasepaint and putty-noses prey just as surely upon archetype as on flesh. Radford quotes folklorist Joseph Campbell: "Universal is the casting of the antagonist, the representative of evil, in the role of the clown. Devils – both the lusty thickheads and the sharp, clever deceivers – are always clowns."

This is not a dry or scholarly read, and there's a lot of welcome debunking. *Bad Clowns* moves colorfully and quickly, thanks to Radford's acerbic wit.

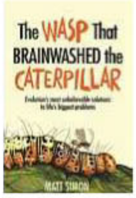
Jay Rath

Fortean Times Verdict

A CLOWN CAR JUST STUFFED WITH INSIGHT AND WIT **8**

Sex 'n' death

Functional necrophilia is not even the most bizarre thing in this fantastic book



The Wasp that Brainwashed the Caterpillar

Matt Simon

Headline 2016
Hb, 260pp, illus, refs, £12.99, ISBN 9781472242037

"Roll up, roll up see the wonders of the natural world. Shudder at the frog that indulges in functional necrophilia. Marvel at the marsupial that fucks until it dies. Wonder at the fish with its penis under its chin…" It's all here in *The Wasp that Brainwashed the Caterpillar*. And it's all absolutely wonderful. Every paragraph reminded me why I became a professional biologist. Those old *FT* mainstays – sex and death – pervade this book.

Sea-cucumbers, for instance, are odd enough. When threatened, the sea-cucumber can shoot its internal organs – sometimes including its respiratory organs and gonads – at its attacker. (Don't worry: they grow back.) They breathe and reproduce – as well as excreting waste – through their anus (technically it's called a *cloacæ*). And that gives some species of the worm-like pearlfish an opening. The pearlfish swim into the sea-cucumber's *cloacæ*, where they're protected with a source of oxygen. (There's buttock-clenching videos of this on the web.) But they can get hungry. So, some start munching on the sea-cucumber's internal organs, including the gonads. In response, some species of sea-cucumber evolved anal teeth.

For 14 hours a day for three weeks, the male *Antechinus* – a bristle-furred, mouse-like marsupial – has sex with every female they can find. They don't even stop to feed. But the biochemical changes that fuel this rampant sexuality leaves the marsupial bleeding internally, blind and with their fur falling out. The males die after mating.

The Amazonian frog *Rhinella proboscidea* mates with hundreds of others in the same pond. In the crush, some females die. But the males don't give up: they massage the dead female's bodies until they eject the eggs, which the male fertilises. Biologists call this functional necrophilia. A fish from Vietnam (*Phallostethus cuulong*) has his gonads just under his mouth along with a serrated rod, which hooks the female. She then receives a bundle of sperm into her sexual organs, which are also under her throat. (There are some great images here: http://bit.ly/1DJRYyO.)

Did you know a hyena has a six-inch clitoris? Or that a male hyena inserts his penis into it? Or that the males of the *Neotrogla* genus of cave-dwelling Brazilian insects have the 'vaginas' and, in *Nature*'s words, the "aggressive, promiscuous females" the 'penises' (http://go.nature.com/1eEpWvC)? Or that male bedbugs punch a hole through the female's hard exoskeleton with his penis and pumps his sperm directly into her body cavity? (It's called traumatic insemination.)

I could go on and on. *The Wasp that Brainwashed the Caterpillar* is packed with examples illustrating how evolution finds a way to fill every niche and every means possible to pass on the genes. *The Wasp that Brainwashed the Caterpillar* should be on the shelves of every *FT* reader. The real *Fantastic Beasts* are right here.

Mark Greener

Fortean Times Verdict

AIN'T MOTHER NATURE… ICKY IN SO MANY ASTONISHING WAYS? **9**

The SF and fantasy round-up

David V Barrett suggests books for a fortean 2017 ranging from a near-perfect future spy tale to the probably most intelligent short story collection you'll ever read

All the Birds in the Sky

Charlie Jane Anders

Titan 2016

Pb, 430pp, £7.99, ISBN 9781785650550

The Ship

Antonia Honeywell

Weidenfeld & Nicolson 2016

Pb, 336pp, £8.99, ISBN 9781780227344

The Race

Nina Allen

Titan 2016

Pb, 447pp, £7.99, ISBN 9781785650369

New Pompeii

Daniel Godfrey

Titan 2016

Pb, 442pp, £7.99, ISBN 9781783298129

Europe in Winter

Dave Hutchinson

Solaris 2016

Pb, 297pp, £7.99, ISBN 9781781084632

Reality By Other Means

James Morrow

Wesleyan University Press 2016

Hb, 299pp, $30, 9780819575944

First Light

A Celebration of Alan Garner

ed. Erica Wagner

Unbound 2016

Hb, 316pp, £20.00, ISBN 9781783522521

To start 2017 off with a literary bang, here are some suggestions for books to get you through the bleak mid-winter, starting with four very different new voices.

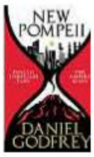
ALL THE BIRDS IN THE SKY
CHARLIE JANE ANDERS

All the Birds in the Sky by Charlie Jane Anders is about the clash between magic and science – and it's a troubled love story. Patricia and Laurence met when they were children. She found herself talking with the birds in a forest; he was a computer geek. Both have appalling parents; both are outsiders, scorned by their schoolmates: loners, social isolates. As they grow through their teens she's recruited by a college of magic and he by a technology guru, and they end up on opposite sides of a conflict which could destroy civilisation. It's beautifully written, with two very believable characters you're rooting for equally.

In Antonia Honeywell's *The Ship*, Lalla grows up in a London where homeless people sleep in the British Museum and where you can only buy food if your ID card is valid. The government is getting more totalitarian by the day; the underclass are lured into Regent's Park and bombed. Lalla's father has been planning for years to escape to sea in an ocean liner, with hundreds of others he has hand-picked. But once they're at sea he becomes a guru figure, adored and almost worshipped by the passengers; it's a new form of dictatorship, with coercion by kindness and no one allowed to disagree, and 16-year-old Lalla can't stand it. They're in a sort of warm limbo where nothing much happens – which unfortunately means there's not a great deal of plot. But it's well written, and the build-up to the inevitable conclusion is highly charged.

In Romney Marshes smart dogs, greyhounds modified with human DNA, have an almost telepathic bond with their handlers – but their racing is closely linked to crime, and the narrator Jenna's young niece, who is particularly close to the dogs, is kidnapped.

In the second part of Nina Allen's *The Race* we meet Christy, who seems to be the writer of the alternate world we've just been reading. The third part causes you to question the accuracy of the second part – and in the fourth part we're back with the kidnapped child, now a young woman trained as an empath for a complex and secretive scientific project. This is a book about the overlaps and interminglings of fact and fiction, reality and fantasy. It's high praise to compare it to Chris Priest's *The Adjacent* and *The Islanders*, where each part, person and place casts doubt on every other aspect. I'd have liked more resolution of the storylines – too much is left in the air – but each individual novella holds the attention.

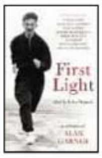


Daniel Godfrey's *New Pompeii* is a time-travel novel that thrives on paradoxes. The company NovusPart has found a way to scoop people out of the past into the present. To avoid changing the course of history they only take those who were just about to die, whether in a plane crash or – the main idea of the novel – much of the population of Pompeii, for whom they build a replica town so that we can study real Romans living in their own environment – but the owners of NovusPart have their own much darker agenda… The plotting is a bit untidy in places, but overall it's a fun read.

EUROPE IN WINTER
HUTCHINSON

Dave Hutchinson's rewriting of the map of Europe reaches its third book in *Europe in Winter*, and it's as complex and intriguing as the first two. There are two Europes, our own a few years on, which has splintered into a host of mini-states; and overlaying it, the Community, a pocket universe of a more pastoral Europe somehow created by a 19th-century English family. Hidden from each other for over a century, with crossing points known only to a few, the two Europes are now beginning to negotiate with each other. More powerful than most countries is the railway line that runs right across Europe, a nation in itself, attacked in the opening pages. The Estonian chef and coureur Rudi, from the earlier books, ties the various strands of the story together in this brilliant near-future spy thriller.

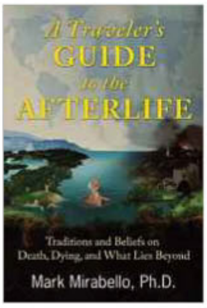
James Morrow's *Reality By Other Means* is probably the most intelligent short story collection you'll ever read – and a must for forteans. Religion, science, philosophy and psychology are central to the stories. Morrow is an atheist with a deep knowledge of religion; there are some delightfully left-field rewritten Bible stories here, as well as a deeply thoughtful tale of a yeti seeking Buddhist enlightenment through the Dalai Lama. There are stories about the golem, genetic manipulation – and about classic logical paradoxes. Every page is a thought-provoking delight.



Alan Garner is one of Britain's finest writers; from *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* to *Boneland* he makes Alderley Edge in Cheshire not just the setting but the most deeply complex character of his work, which is deeply imbued with mythology. *First Light* is a wonderful collection of very personal essays on Garner and his work by creative writers, academics, archæologists and others – including Stephen Fry, Neil Gaiman, Philip Pullman and former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams – telling how Garner's stories have affected their lives.

THE WORLD OF STRANGE PHENOMENA
ForteanTimes
CAESAR
RAPE OF LUCRECE
MACBETH
OTHELLO
RICHARD II

LOVES GOOD BOOKS


A Traveler's GUIDE to the AFTERLIFE
Traditions and Beliefs on Death, Dying, and What Lies Beyond
Mark Mirabello, Ph.D.

A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO THE AFTERLIFE

TRADITIONS AND BELIEFS ON DEATH, DYING, AND WHAT LIES BEYOND

– BY MARK MIRABELLO, PH.D.

Considering the question "What is death?" Mark Mirabello, Ph.D. provides answers from more than 900 sources including a wide range of ancient and modern thinkers who opined that we may already be dead and only dreaming we are alive. He explores the trek of the soul through life and death with first-hand accounts of the death journey and notes that what is perceived as death here may actually be life somewhere else. He explains how spectres and ghosts are produced and offers techniques to communicate with the dead as well as instructions for an out-of-body experience and the complete procedure for a séance.

Available Online and from Bookstores Everywhere
Format : Paperback Book | ISBN 9781620555972
£12.99

John Matthews
The Mystery of Spring-Heeled Jack
From Victorian Legend to Steampunk Hero

THE MYSTERY OF SPRING-HEELED JACK

FROM VICTORIAN LEGEND TO STEAMPUNK HERO

– BY JOHN MATTHEWS

Spring-Heeled Jack – a tall, thin, bounding figure with bat-like wings, clawed hands, wheels of fire for eyes, and breath of blue flames – first leapt to public attention in Victorian London in 1838, springing over hedges and walls from dark lanes and dank graveyards to frighten and sometimes physically attack women. News of this strange and terrifying character quickly spread, but despite numerous sightings through 1904 he was never captured or identified.

Providing an extensive look at Spring-Heeled Jack from his beginnings to the present, author John Matthews illustrates why the worldwide Steampunk community has so thoroughly embraced Jack.

Available Online and from Bookstores Everywhere
Format : Paperback Book | ISBN 9781620554968
£14.99

"This is one secret everyone should know about." Sue, Workington

Sweet Cures Waterfall D-Mannose 50g Powder Healthy Bladder

WINNER 2015 Best Alternative Product/Service

cam Best Alternative Product WINNER 2015

CALL US ON 01904 789559
READ OVER 600 REVIEWS
www.sweet-cures.com

Sweet Cures® Waterfall D-Mannose® – A new approach to bladder health, cystitis and prostatitis

SEND REVIEW COPIES OF DVDS, BLU-RAYS AND GAMES TO:
FORTEAN TIMES, PO BOX 71602, LONDON E17 0QD.

The Eagle Huntress

Dir Otto Bell, UK/Mongolia/US 2016

On UK release from 16 December

The Eagle Huntress, directed by documentary-maker Otto Bell, tells the story of 13-year-old Kazakh girl Aishol Pan attempting to continue a centuries-old tradition of hunting with eagles on the Mongolian Steppe. This being a centuries-old tradition it has been until now an exclusively male tradition. Narrated by Daisy Ridley (*Star Wars: The Force Awakens*), who also executive produced, along with Morgan Spurlock, the film follows this gutsy girl on a journey to become a fully fledged, eagle-brandishing hunter of small animals.

Encouraged by an approving father who is himself an eagle hunter, the girl's training begins with the help of her dad's eagle but she quickly moves on to catching her own eagle just before it's ready to fledge. Her next hurdle is the Golden Eagle Festival, an annual event where hunters gather to compete and prove their skills. Finally, she must prove herself a true hunter by catching a fox on a winter hunt in freezing conditions.

At 90 minutes (it seemed longer), the documentary didn't sit with me as well as it did other reviewers. Some of the scenes felt set up and awkwardly acted, in the manner of a scripted reality show. The score is slightly cheesy and there's a too obvious girl-power song by Sia over the credits; and my own thoughts about how the fox, ponies riding in freezing conditions, and an eagle snatched from its nest felt about the whole thing didn't help.

However, the gorgeous grin and optimism of young Aisholpan in contrast to the smirks and disapproving remarks by elderly eagle hunters (women shouldn't hunt: it's too cold and they're needed to make the tea and that sort of thing) helped keep me watching.

There's also stupendous scenery, wonderful cinematography and an insight into a fascinating culture (and check out the photographs by Asher Svidensky that inspired the film). We're watching the birth of a new aspect of the culture; I've read that other girls in Mongolia have since started to train as eagle hunters. And Aisholpan is a hardworking, uncomplaining role model with a mighty strong arm – so it's probably not a bad film for your young daughter to see.

Julie MacNamee

Fortean Times Verdict
BIG BIRDS AND AN APPEALING YOUNG HEROINE: NOT BAD **6**

Let's Be Evil

Dir Martin Owen, US 2016

Signature Entertainment, £13.99 (DVD & VOD)

In Martin Owen's *Let's Be Evil*, Jenny (Elizabeth Morris), who is in financial straits due to an ailing mother, begins work as a supervisor for extremely gifted children at a secret underground facility. Here she is joined by fellow supervisors Tiggs (Kara Tointon) and Darby (Elliot James Langridge) in their seemingly mundane tasks in a virtual reality world; but things soon begin to go awry.

Reminiscent of the myriad of cheap but often fun science fiction films of the 1980s, *Let's Be Evil* gives a substantial role to neon lighting and a synth soundtrack, and what the filmmakers have achieved with such a small budget is impressive. The first-person point of view is convincingly established, and the characters' dependency on the virtual reality glasses adds to the sense of unease once the second act begins to unfold, forcing the viewer to walk in the protagonists' shoes when turning around many a dark corner, where some good scares lurk.

These visual aspects have been executed well, but the story itself has been stretched much too thin. The potential to explore current concerns about children and their use of technology goes virtually unexplored in favour of using the overly gifted kids merely to mimic the familiar visuals from *Village of the Damned*.

While the children have their own way of communicating and appear both omnipresent and omnipotent because of their intelligence and use of technology, they never become a truly terrifying presence. Neither does it help that none of the characters is fleshed out enough for the viewer to actually care about them; and the mostly mediocre acting does nothing to invoke empathy either, resulting in the film's final twist having little to no impact. The viewer is left feeling that this is all style and no substance.

Leyla Mikkelsen

Fortean Times Verdict
ENJOYABLE ENOUGH BUT ULTIMATELY INSUBSTANTIAL **4**

Heartless

Dirs Natasha Arthy & Kaspar Munk, Denmark 2014

Arrow Films, £9.99 (DVD)

Sophie and Sebastian Nielsen (Julie Zangenberg and Sebastian Jessen, *Borgen*) are twins in their late teens with a particular affliction: to survive they need to suck energy or life essence from other people. As they do so, their eyes turn black; and if they take too much, their victim bursts into flames.

Seeking to track down their origins they return to the orphanage where their mother left them as babies and find a clue leading to Ottman's Boarding School. There are flashbacks in every episode to a disastrous love triangle at Ottman's Manor in 1666, though the connection to the present – a curse by a woman burned to death – is not fully revealed until halfway through the series. The school, effectively a remote private VI form college (compare Hex), is led by three prefects – hard, arrogant Nazi Youth types – under headmaster Henrik Just (Nikolaj Kopernicus, *The Killing*), and those with the curse are drawn there. What is the secret of the head's own family? And what is the connection to the bizarre ritual initiation new students must endure?

As Sophie and Sebastian search for answers to who they are, and whether they can ever become normal, both get involved with other students, despite Sophie telling her brother: "People don't fall in love with their food." Sophie has an intense relationship with one of the headmaster's daughters, who has supernatural powers of her own, while Sebastian uses one girl who adores him for "food" while falling for another whom he daren't kiss.

Heartless is dark, moody, brooding and intensely erotic, and not just because of sucking life energy through a kiss; there's homoeroticism between Sophie and Emilie, and between the prefects, and incestuous closeness between the twins as they share energy mouth to mouth, and between the headmaster and his oldest daughter.

Despite the hardness and cruelty of the twins – "He's dead, Sophie. Don't you care?" "No. He was food, and you were hungry" – your sympathies are with them throughout; headmaster Just is even more cruel in hunting down those with the curse. The acting of all three is spot on.

This series, created by the writer of *The Bridge* and the director of *The Killing*, is a superb new twist on Scandi Noir: gothic supernatural rather than crime drama. It's Danish language with English subtitles, which are generally pretty good. Much of the indoor filming is in shade, punctuated by shafts of natural light; the outdoor scenery – often in atmospheric woods – is stunning. The theme music – "Don't Believe the Demons" by Roxy Jules (Danish singer Julie Runa) – is dark, discordant and hauntingly beautiful.

There are a couple of unresolved plot points, and there are no extras on the DVDs, but the greatest criticism of Heartless is that it's only eight episodes long. A twist in the final seconds opens the way for a possible second series...

David V Barrett

Fortean Times Verdict

DARK AND BEAUTIFUL: A VAMPIRE TALE WITH NO BLOOD **8**

Donnie Darko

Dir Richard Kelly, US 2001

Arrow Video, £34.99 (Dual Format)

Full disclosure: I'd never seen *Donnie Darko* before now, despite countless recommendations from friends and colleagues over the years, and I get the feeling that in coming so late to the party I've missed the point.

This tale of a psychologically troubled teenager who is told by a creepy six-ft-tall rabbit dude that the world will end in 28 days is certainly an oddity. Is it a dark SF parable about time travel and parallel universes, or an offbeat study of teenage angst? I guess we can agree it's both, but that didn't make it any more watchable for me. While admittedly an ambitious first feature for young director Richard Kelly, the film's sub-Lynchian attempts at everyday surrealism struck me as clumsy, its pacing as glacial and its characters as uninteresting. The 1980s whitebread suburban setting evokes memories of everything from *Nightmare on Elm Street* to *The Breakfast Club*, and also means lashings of Tears for Fears and Echo and the Bunnymen (is that what inspired the rabbit?), so your mileage may vary. Ultimately, it struck me as a sort of gloomy emo riff on *Back to the Future* with just a couple of genuinely striking scenes.

This is a lovely package for fans, though, including newly restored theatrical and director's cuts, a feature-length making-of documentary, commentaries and some of Kelly's early films.

David Sutton

Fortean Times Verdict

QUIRKY CULT CLASSIC GETS A LOVING BLU-RAY RE-RELEASE **6**

SHORTS

HOWLING II: YOUR SISTER IS A WEREWOLF

Arrow Video, £15.99 (Dual Format)

I hated this movie when it first came out, because Joe Dante's *The Howling* was (and still is) my favourite werewolf film. Here, director Philippe Mora pisses on the original's memory with giddy abandon, with a ridiculous, softcore, pop video of a film. Yet watching it again on Blu Ray, I think I finally get the joke. It's still patchy and dumb, and some of the acting is woeful. Even Christopher Lee feels stilted in the opening monologue, if that were possible. The orgy scenes and repeated breast flashing felt infantile and disrespectful to my teenage *Howling*-loving self. Now, in my 40s, I just found myself snort-laughing; which I guess was Mora's point. **Rev Peter Laws** 6/10

THE A-TEAM: THE COMPLETE COLLECTION

Fabulous Films, £149.99 (Blu-ray)

Fabulous Films are quietly doing wonders in the classic TV department and they continue their stellar restorative work with this: the complete *A-Team* on Blu-Ray. Watching these episodes now it's astonishing how repetitive the story rhythms are. Hannibal gets hired in disguise by a pretty girl; they break Murdock out of the asylum; B.A. is drugged. They fight baddies, get locked up, build a rocket launcher out of pipes and bananas, win the day and have a giggle at the end. Multiply by 97 and you pretty much have the entire series. But man, is it good fun! Fortean highlights aren't limited to the miraculous survival rate from high-speed helicopter crashes. In the episode "Timber!" from season three, Murdock even hunts down Bigfoot. The sucker traps B.A. instead. I LOL'd. **PL** 7/10

THE TIME TRAVELLERS

Fabulous Filme, £11.99 (DVD)

"Step through 'The Time Portal' beyond the crack in Space and Time where the fantastic world of the future will freeze your blood with its weird horrors!" Weird horrors? I'm in. 1964's *The Time Travellers* is a creaky, fun, *Star Trek*-style romp in which scientists step through a TV screen and find themselves in the underground base of a future Earth, complete with kooky short skirts and surly future leaders. It's been suggested that Irwin Allen's *The Time Tunnel* TV series was inspired by this movie. Oh, and the cinematographer Vilmos Zsigmond went on to shoot Spielberg's *Close Encounters*, no less. **PL** 6/10

BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE

Warner Home Video, £12.99 (Blu-ray), £9.99 (DVD)

Batman fans had long awaited a screen version of Alan Moore and Brian Bolland's dark and nihilistic 1988 graphic novel. Excitement grew when the voice cast was announced: Kevin Conroy and Mark Hamill had voiced Batman and the Joker in the acclaimed *Batman: The Animated Series*. Sadly, *Batman: The Killing Joke* is garbage. The animation looks like a generic Saturday morning kids' cartoon; Moore's exquisite dialogue is frequently rewritten; and there's a tacked-on story, an attempt to rehabilitate Batgirl's victim status in Moore's original, in which she and Batman have sex. A massive disappointment and a wasted opportunity. **Richard Freeman** 3/10

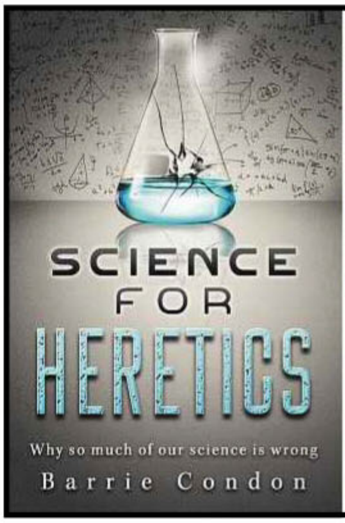
WORLD'S BEST GIFT IDEA?

For all sports & fitness enthusiasts who want their arms, elbows, wrists and grip to be **stronger than ever**, it can only be Powerball® this Christmas

16673
FCN/CLR
BATTERY FREE
powerball

OVER 1000 ★★★★★ 5-STAR REVIEWS • FROM £14.99

Argos amazon powerballs.com


SCIENCE FOR HERETICS
Why so much of our science is wrong
Barrie Condon

Warnings from history of the risks we run with a universe we do not understand.

Special Kindle price £3.99,
paperback £9.99.

SELF PUBLISHERS
et al.

Authoring the next best selling print book is only *part* of the story.

'Xelucha Book Design & Typesetting' will do justice to all that hard work.

We offer a professional, competitive design service, helping you turn raw docs and rough ideas into printer-ready files.

Any type of publication undertaken. Visit us now: WWW.XELUCHA.COM

onevillage.com
Active vegetable oils soap
Sandalwood
A treat for skin & hair
onevillage.com
Active vegetable oils soap
neem
A treat for skin & hair
with citronella
onevillage.com
What's in a bar of soap?

Most soap is made from a cocktail of chemicals in a cheap fat heavily scented with synthetic fragrances.

Ours is not at all like that. The substance of our soap is expensive active vegetable oils – such as **neem oil** from neem seeds, known for centuries for its amazing healing properties for skin and wellbeing.

No *sodium lauryl sulfate*, no *triclosan*, no *antibacterial chemicals*, no *ammonium*, no *artificial scents*. Our sandalwood is authentic powder and oil from the tree – a natural energizer and antiseptic.

Neem or sandalwood soap.
Straightaway, when you use our soap, you will know from the feel and texture this is true wholesome soap like no other.

Each bar of our soap weighs 125gr.

Here's your opportunity to try it. For only **£12** you can order **4** generous bars, including free postage in UK. Choose any combination – 4 the same or your assortment of both soaps.

For speedy service, order at **Onevillage.com** – where other ideas also await you!

onevillage.com
One Village Soap,
Charlbury, OX7 3SQ
✆ 01608 811811

The Socialist Party

aims at building a moneyless world community based on common ownership and democratic control with production solely for use not profit. It opposes all leadership, all war.

For 3 **FREE** issues of our monthly Socialist Standard write to:
The Socialist Party (BI)
52 Clapham High Street
London SW4 7UN

www.worldsocialism.org/bi

DEVELOP YOUR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING
POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN EMOTIONAL EDUCATION
Atlow Mill Centre
for emotional education

A Level 7 Course

A unique qualification in the area of Emotional Wellbeing / Intelligence. Useful for anyone wishing to improve their personal life, increase their career prospects, change their career, or develop their ability to lead and facilitate groups. It is also likely to contribute to you gaining employment.

Develop insight and skills to encourage the emotional growth and wellbeing of others and of yourself by combining personal development with academic learning.

A part-time residential course in the heart of the beautiful Derbyshire Dales over 9 weekends from 31st March 2017— March 2018

Successful completion leads to a qualification equivalent to the first stage of a Master's degree level.

Open to non-graduates

Places are limited, Enrolling NOW. • Call: 01335 370494
e-mail: courses@atlowmill.org • visit: www.atlowmill.org

LIVING NATURALLY.

THE SOAPNUT APOTHECARY

LAUNDRY · SKINCARE · HAIRCARE

100% Natural · Organic · Vegan · Cruelty-Free

The 1st company in the world to develop a 100% Natural Laundry, Haircare, Skincare Range Based on Organic Herbs & Organic Wildcrafted Soapnuts.

Perfect for Sensitive Skin, Eczema, Psoriasis, Acne or Dry Skin.

Handmade in the UK in small batches with 100% vegan, natural and organic, ethically sourced, cruelty-free ingredients. Not tested on animals.

Free From: palm oil, sls', parabens, phthalates, mineral oil, artificial additives or fragrances, micro plastics and GM ingredients

USE CODE: FORTEAN for 15% OFF

WWW.SOAPNUTS.CO.UK

USDA ORGANIC

ECO CERT

India Organic

National Programme for Organic Production

Vegan

highly commended healthy awards 2013

CONTACT US BY POST: BOX 2409 LONDON NW5 4NP
OR E-MAIL sieveking@forteantimes.com
PLEASE PROVIDE US WITH YOUR POSTAL ADDRESS

Dear FT...

letters

Juggalos

The clown panic does seem to have got well and truly out of hand this time [**FT347:28-35**]. One thing I haven't seen mentioned in connection with the latest wave is that since the mid-1990s there has been a well known and thriving group of people dressing as scary clowns across the US: the Juggalos.

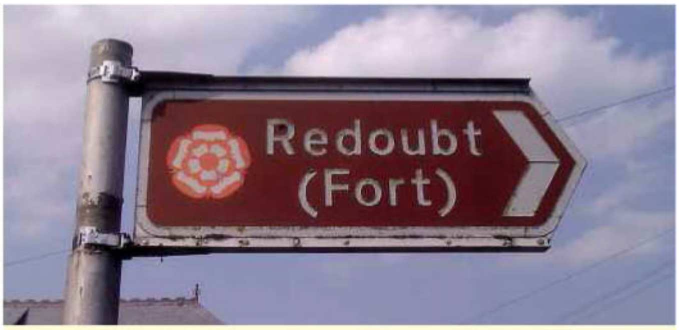
Juggalos are fans of the rap group Insane Clown Posse and associated artists, and routinely wear menacing clown makeup, and at times full clown costume. Their signature clothing brand is called Hatchet Wear, which features a logo of a silhouetted clown figure waving a hatchet. There are estimated to be around a million Juggalos in the US and while most are harmless music fans, an estimated 10 per cent are part of the gang subculture. These Juggalos have been classified as criminal gangs in 21 states and have been convicted of attacking people with cleavers, machetes, knives and baseball bats as well as carrying out drive-by shootings. One group has even been convicted of terrorist offences and fomenting violent revolution. I suspect some of the recent 'evil clown' sightings have actually been of Juggalos, and that stories of Juggalo crime have fuelled fears of potential clown violence.

Ian Simmons
Newcastle upon Tyne

Classical Deep Throat

Barry Baldwin's otherwise splendid column on classical prostitutes [**FT347:14**] left out one important lady – Sthenelais in Anth.Pal. 5.2, "whose breath smells of gold" (according to WR Paton's translation, at least). But gold doesn't smell of anything. In fact the Greek can only mean "She vomits something yellow". Assuming this is literal, the liquid involved is likely to be bile, which she projects as part of fellatio. An academic like Paton, publishing in 1916, might not have been au fait with such practices. The epigram's author and date are uncertain. It shows affinity, I believe, with an early Byzantine poet known as Macedonius the Consul. By the way, I suspect Martial's Philænis used an olisbos or strap-on, as the empress Messalina presumably did in an encounter with Suillius Cæsoninus, of whom Tacitus (*Annals* 11.36) writes "passus muliebria" – "He had done to him what women have done to them". If Sthenelais was Deep Throat, Messalina was Dolly Dagger.

Richard George
St Albans, Hertfordshire



Keep on doubting

This sign outside Harwich in Essex has presumably been put up by the local Fortean Society, to remind us that doubt alone is not enough.

Nils Erik Grande *Oslo, Norway*

Lifelong habits

The fascinating survey of super-centenarians across the globe [**FT346:18-20**] led me to the conclusion that the secret to longevity is consistency. When each elderly person was asked to what they attributed their long lifespan, the answers were many and vastly varied from eggs to cigarettes to wine and so on; but the one thing they all have in common is that they had been taking their particular fancy with unwavering discipline for decades. And so, my advice to anybody wanting to see 100 plus would be to choose your poison and stick to it.

Simon Besson
By email

Beware turbulence

Mythconceptions 104 starts well enough by exposing the non existence of 'air pockets' [**FT344:19**] – but the opinion of "a leading expert on the subject" that he has never heard of a commercial flight being brought down by turbulence is nonsense. Throughout the history of commercial aviation such accidents have been frequent; they have only become very rare in the last 20 years due to a vast effort by air traffic controllers, weather forecasters, designers of aircraft and avionics and procedural changes to avoid encountering severe turbulence. Despite all these precautions, we cannot change our planet's weather systems so, although deaths are now very rare, there are still frequent incidents of injuries and nasty shocks resulting from commercial airliners encountering severe turbulence. There is a legal requirement to report these occurrences and the findings are available to the public.

Our current good safety record is the result of many hard lessons and intensive investigations, so maybe the "leading expert" should read a bit about Rotor Turbulence/Mountain Wave which destroyed BOAC Boeing 707 G-APFE with the loss of 124 lives on 5 March 1966, followed five months later by Braniff Airlines BAC 1-11 N1553 on 6 August that same year. Another couple of nasty partners in crime are Microburst and Windshear, which led to the loss of an Eastern Airlines Boeing 727 at JFK on 26 June 1975, Pan American Boeing 727 on 9 July 1982 and Delta Airlines Tristar on 2 August 1985. There are many more and the list continues to grow.

I have worked in aviation maintenance for 35 years and can assure nervous readers that everything humanly possible is done to avoid accidents – so if you are on a flight and the pilot tells you that you are diverting to avoid weather, be glad that you will just be taking a bit of a delay and not climbing out of a smoking hole in the ground.

Stewart Robertson
Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire

The pool of life

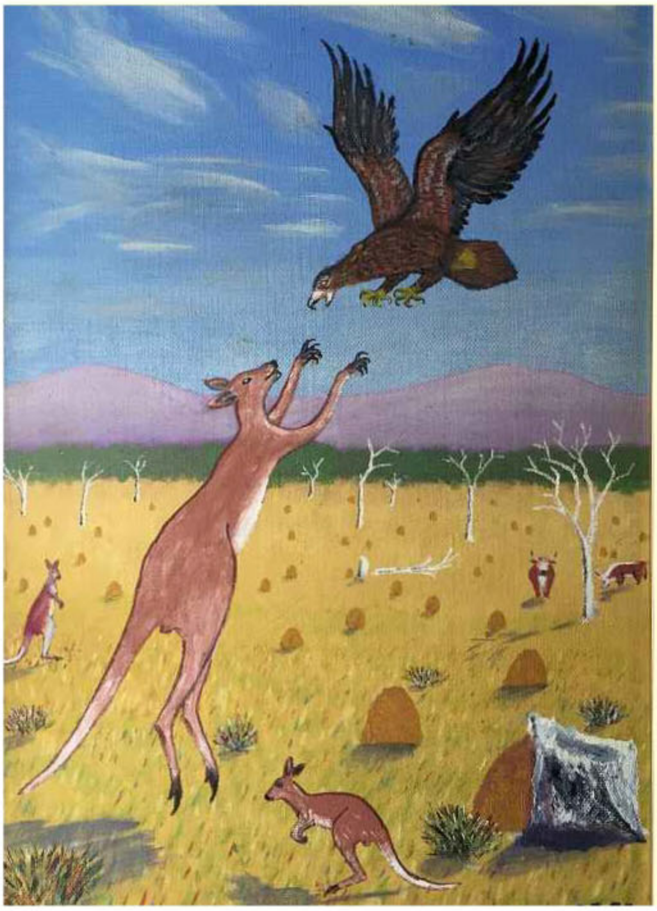
When I saw that Jenny Randles had written an article discussing Jung's theory of synchronicity and taking place in Liverpool (with a nod to the Beatles naturally) [**FT341:26-27**], I incorrectly anticipated that she would refer to his 1927 "Liverpool dream", which appears in Jung's autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, published in 1962 a year after his death. In the dream Jung found himself in a "dirty, sooty city". He realised he was in Liverpool (the pool of life), a place he had never actually visited.

In the dream he saw a magnolia tree displaying "a shower of reddish blossoms" which "stood in the sunlight and [was] at the same time the source of [the] light." Jung experienced it as "the first inkling" of his own "personal myth". By 1964 the world cast an astonished eye on dirty and sooty Liverpool blossoming with a great 20th century cultural myth (that'd be the Beatles, naturally). Did Jung have a precognitive dream of the coming of the Fab Four? Jung, of course, appears on the cover of *Sgt. Pepper*.

Jung's most illustrative example of a "meaningful coincidence" comes from the story of a patient who, while describing a dream involving a sacred scarab beetle, is interrupted when an actual beetle arrives a-tap-tapping at the window. Jung handed the beetle to his patient with the comment: "Here is your scarab".

Daniel B Knight
Westbrook, Maine

letters



Roo sees off eagle

After reading "Eagles Attack!" [**FT347:6-7**], I thought you might be interested in this painting by Oswald Blair, my wife's grandfather. He is a well-known naive artist here in Australia. The picture depicts the efforts of a mother kangaroo defending her joey from an eagle. The incident was observed by the artist, who wrote a description on the back of the painting: "This incident was seen by me in the early Thirties. When the eagle swooped at the joey the mother roo would jump high in the air, intercept it and claw at it. While the eagle was turning to swoop again the roo would be racing toward the scrub perhaps almost a mile away. By the time the eagle had swooped five or six times the roo had reached the safe cover of the scrub where the bird could not continue the chase any longer." [O Blair] A further note adds: "The mother roo having another joey in her pouch had to protect the larger one."

Andrew Harding
Kilsyth, Victoria, Australia

Moving coffins

The article 'Where the dead do not rest' [**FT347:26-27**] interested me as it mentioned a case of coffins moving in a Suffolk church. Could it be that a story as wildly dark and gothic as that set in a lonely churchyard in Barbados could have occurred just a few miles away from where I live?

A search of *The European Magazine and London Review* for September 1815 revealed the source of the story and the first of several problems concerning its authenticity. The article was included in a section of the magazine titled 'The Hive' and was introduced as 'Curious Vault at Staunton in Suffolk'. This is indeed curious, since as far as I am aware, there has never has been a village in Suffolk called Staunton. There is one nine miles from Bury St Edmunds called Stanton, which, assuming a typesetting error or Chinese whispers, might be the place. Several authors, it would seem, have made this assumption, as the article has often been reprinted as 'the Curious Vault at Stanton in Suffolk'.

Another problem arises if Stanton was indeed the village concerned, for it has two mediæval churches. The current parish church of All Saints sits in the middle of the village. It has lost its tower, which collapsed at the beginning of the 20th century, but remains in use. The church of St John is sited to the northwest of the village cut off by the busy Bury St Edmunds-to-Diss road. Now an unroofed ruin, it is still a consecrated building and the churchyard remains in use. In the 18th and 19th centuries, both buildings were in use, so in which did the event, if it took place, actually occur?

The aforementioned article is sandwiched between two others. The first, entitled 'Maria, A true story', tells the humorous tale of a young girl who spurns the advances of an earnest, ill-intentioned young man by writing a letter that mentions her guardian uncle. The second describes a curious musical organ composed of live pigs created by the Abbott of Baigne for King Henry XI of France. The whole published series of articles in 'The Hive' is composed of anecdotes seemingly suitable for using in small talk to elicit 'genteel conversation'. Most of the articles are of historical interest, point some moral or explain the seemingly inexplicable. The main problem is that the coffin article is quoted and reproduced without including the footnote that seems to explain the mystery:

"Curious vault at Staunton, Suffolk

"On opening it some years since, several leaden coffins with wooden cases that had been fixed to biers, were found displaced, to the great astonishment of many of the inhabitants of the village. The coffins were again placed as before and properly closed; when some time ago, another of the family dying, they were a second time found displaced; and two years after there were not only found all of the biers, but one coffin as heavy as to require eight men to lift it, was found at the fourth step that leads into the vault. – Whence arose this operation, in which, it is certain, no one had a hand?

N.B. It was occasioned by water, as is imagined, though no signs of it appeared at the different periods of time that the vault was opened."

So as you can see the mystery of the curious vault is probably explained from the very beginning. Water gets into the vault, the coffins float around, the water subsides and on the next opening of the vault the coffins are out of place as if moved by unseen hands. It is interesting to wonder if the writer J Mede-Falkner ever came across this story, as I was reminded of the coffins of the Mohune family supposedly floating around in the vault beneath the church in his novel *Moonfleet*.

Identifying authorship of the articles in *The European Magazine* is very difficult as most conclude merely with initials or a pen name. The authorship of 'The Hive' is never given and I am reminded of the unknown 'Old Codgers' who commented on articles and quoted anecdotes in the *Daily Mirror* throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

The publisher of *The European Magazine* in 1815 was James Asperne (1757-1820), working from his office at 32 Cornhill, London. An illustration of this office can be found as a frontispiece of one of the magazines and above the door can be clearly seen three Masonic symbols. A web search revealed a painting of Asperne by Samuel Drummond (1765-1844) painted in 1813 and showing him in his Masonic Regalia, holding a book, as befits a publisher. His obituary in *The European Magazine* states that he was Grand Steward of the Grand Lodge of England in 1814.

Thus the story becomes even more curious. The author may well have been Asperne himself. Joe Nickell concluded that the mystery of the Chase family vault in Barbados was nothing more than a Masonic joke. Could the story of the Suffolk coffins be the same from the Mason Asperne? The story as quoted could be a retelling of a local piece of Suffolk folklore. However, due to the spelling of the village name, the location cannot be determined with any certainty. I can find no other source of this story, nor of any local oral tradition of the tale.

In 2010 an actress rehearsing for a play in the church of St Mary, Redgrave, a few miles away from Stanton, dislodged a marble flagstone in the chancel, revealing the entrance to the Holt family vault. Timbers supporting the flagstone that sealed the entrance had rotted and given way. The removal of the flagstone revealed steps and a short tunnel leading to a vault underneath the north vestry, which originally had the Holt family pew. The vault contained 10 lead coffins originally cased in wood, most of which had rotted away leaving only the leaden shells. Stacked in piles, the weight of the lead had caused some of the shells of the lower coffins to buckle and split, tipping the piles over. The scene was very reminiscent of that which supposedly greeted those who peered into the Chase family vault 200 years earlier. The vault has now been resealed, but if it is ever reopened, will the coffins remain undisturbed or will they have mysteriously moved, "to the great astonishment of many"?

Mark Utting
Thornham Magna, Suffolk

Racy conversations

Lewis Hurst's letter [**FT346:65**] about a bucket of water acting as a transmitter for a radio signal with alarming consequences reminded me of an amusing episode that befell my elderly grandparents in the early 1980s. They lived on a council estate at Northway, near Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire, very close to Junction 9 of the M5. This was the post-*Convoy* era when trucking culture and CB (citizen band) radio was still pretty cool. The lady who lived across the road from my grandparents had clearly caught the trucking bug and was in the habit of conducting extremely racy conversations on her CB radio with drivers on the nearby M5, using the handle "Jemima", not her real name. Often these conversations would result in an HGV being parked up for an hour or two or overnight outside her house.

The reason my grandparents knew about these racy conversations in intimate detail was because they were bizarrely broadcast within their house by pretty much any electrical appliance that was switched on at the time. It was perhaps to be expected that *Gardener's Question Time* on the radio might be overwhelmed by a stronger local signal carrying earthy details of what Jemima was planning to do with Droitwich's equivalent of Rubber Duck, but remarkably the saucy chat also emanated from the record player, TV, food mixer, vacuum cleaner and toaster. My grandfather worked making aircraft instruments and was a bit of a technological tinkerer and hobbyist, but I remember him being as bemused by these occurrences as the rest if us.

Mark Graham
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire

I got a kick out of reading Lewis Hurst's letter 'A Talking Bucket'. He tells about a man hearing a voice from his bucket being picked up from a secret transmitter hidden near London during WWII. The actress Lucille Ball was instrumental is locating a Japanese transmitter during WWII. While working for a movie studio, Ball would hear Japanese transmission every time she drove down a certain street in Los Angeles. The gold filling in her tooth was acting as a transmitter relaying the sound waves over her car radio. This led to the discovery of the Japanese transmitter hidden in downtown Los Angeles.

Greg May
Orlando, Florida

Championing Tesla

I see that the Tesla-kicking season is upon us. One of the leading exponents of this twaddle seems to be Thomas H White; his name appears at the bottom of all Wiki pages on the subject as a reference. The old chestnut "Who invented radio?" raises its head and can be easily put to rest by Googling "four tuned circuits" – a Tesla patent used in every transmitter and receiver for more than a century.

"Questions to TH White: Shouldn't Nikola Tesla be considered the 'inventor of radio', given that in 1943 the United States Supreme Court overturned all of Marconi's patents and proclaimed Tesla 'the true inventor'? White says: Gut Reaction: Are you joking??? In no way, shape or form can this guy be considered the 'inventor of radio'. Furthermore, contrary to what you might have read, the U.S. Supreme Court never said that he was – not in 1943, not in any other year. If fact, if anything Tesla's 'contribution' was to confuse and slow radio development, due to his misunderstanding of the physics involved. Fortunately, at the time few people were listening to his misguided and exaggerated 'true wireless' ramblings."

This is the old straw man manœuvre: White misdirects the reader with something no one has ever claimed. The court case was not about who invented radio but about Marconi's theft of Tesla's patents and those of other researchers. Tesla's four-tuned circuits (two on the receiving side and two on the transmitting side, secured by US patents #645,576 and #649,621) were the basis of the US Supreme Court decision (Case #369 decided 21 June 1943): they overturned Marconi's basic patent on the invention of radio.

This is what Cornell University Law School has to say about the case: "Tesla thus anticipated the following features of the Marconi patent: A charging circuit in the transmitter for causing oscillations of the desired frequency, coupled, through a transformer, with the open antenna circuit, and the synchronisation of the two circuits by the proper disposition of the inductance in either the closed or the antenna circuit or both. By this and the added disclosure of the two (tuned)-circuit arrangement in the receiver with similar adjustment, he [Tesla] anticipated the four circuit tuned combination of Marconi. A feature of the Marconi combination not shown by Tesla was the use of a variable inductance as a means of adjusting the tuning of the antenna circuit of transmitter and receiver. This was developed by Lodge after Tesla's patent but before the Marconi patent in suit..."

Charles P Steinmetz, who according to Wiki was the best thing since sliced bread, was a contemporary of Tesla and like Tesla said he did not believe that the electron existed; he said it was a childish idea. As did, amazingly, JJ Thomson, who is billed as the discoverer of the electron. They all believed that electric current travelled in a field outside of the conductor and that electrons were not the cause. Now, if we look at the Wiki page 'Electron', that almost says the same thing as Tesla et al, we find: "Because of collisions between electrons and atoms, the drift velocity of electrons in a conductor is on the order of *millimetres per second*. However, the speed at which a change of current at one point in the material causes changes in currents in other parts of the material, the velocity of propagation, is typically about 75% of light speed. This occurs because electrical signals propagate as a *wave*, with the velocity dependent on the dielectric constant of the material." And so we are bound to ask what it was that was streaming through JJ Thomson's cathode ray tube. It was certainly not electrons, as he himself remarked. He said the effect was due to gas in the tube. But later, when vacuum tubes were in full production, it was found that they were much more efficient with a hard vacuum, and so it was not the gas.

Alan Wade
Birmingham

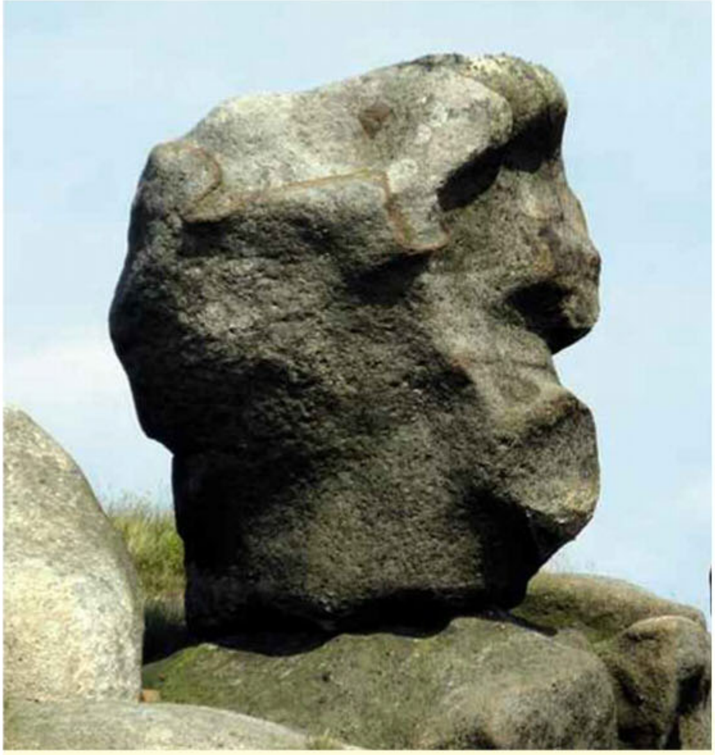
MARTIN ROSS

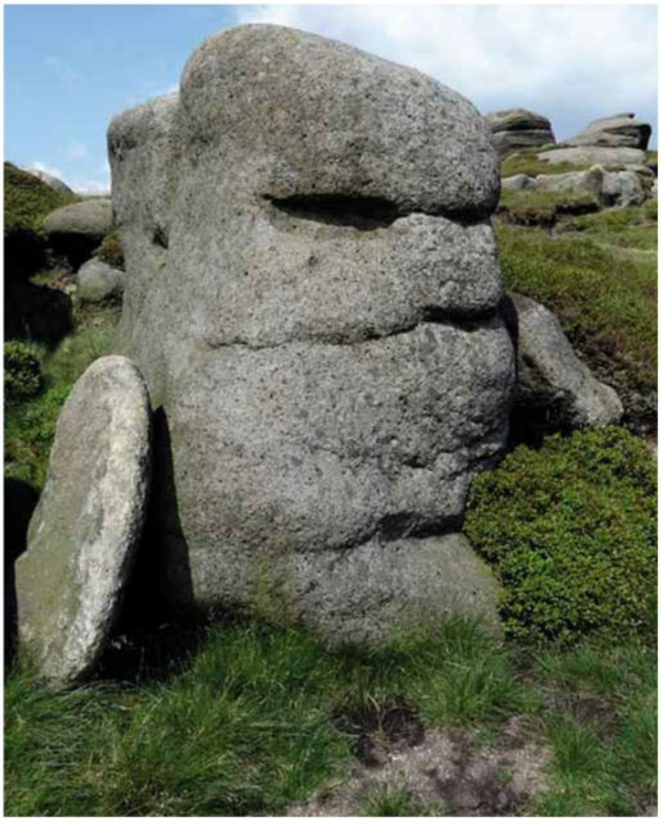
"I thought this was a social call – I brought a cake."

letters

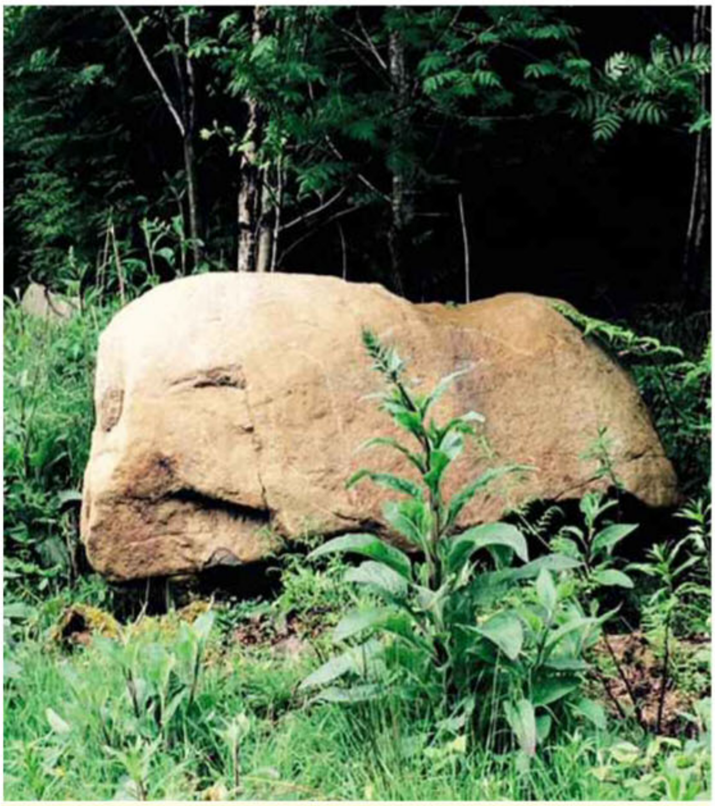
SIMULACRA CORNER: ROCK FACES

We are always glad to receive pictures of spontaneous forms and figures, or any curious images.
Send them (with your postal address) to Fortean Times, PO Box 2409, London NW5 4NP or to sieveking@forteantimes.com.

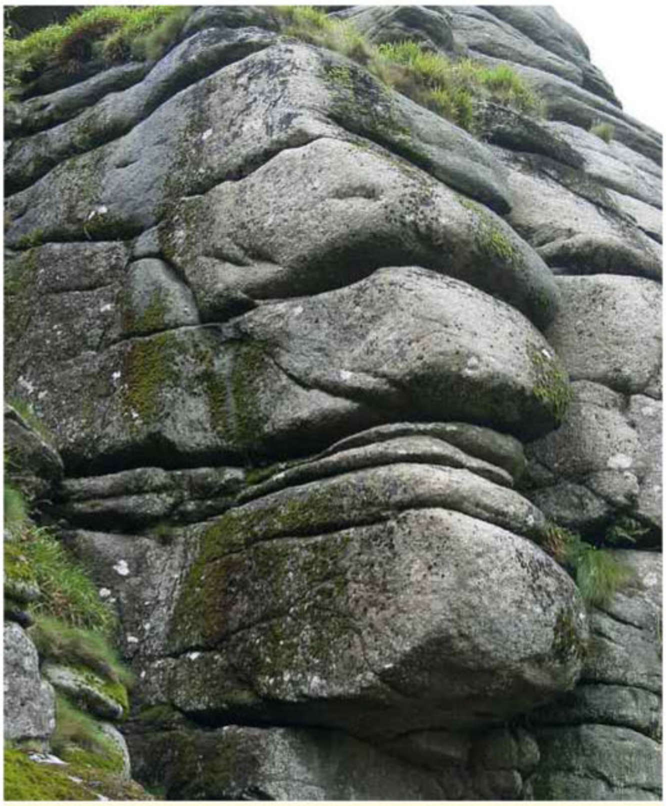




David Byrne noticed these stone heads in the Peak District in Derbyshire.



Leonie White noticed this sphinx-like boulder at Trefriw-Llanrhychwyn in Snowdonia.



A rock face captured by Mark Pilkington at Vixen Tor on Dartmoor.

it happened to me...

Have you had strange experiences that you cannot explain?
We are always interested in reading of odd events and occurrences.
CONTACT US BY POST: **FORTEAN TIMES, BOX 2409, LONDON, NW5 4NP**
OR E-MAIL TO **sieveking@forteantimes.com**
Or post your message on the **www.forteantimes.com** message board.

First-hand accounts from *FT* readers and browsers of www.forteantimes.com

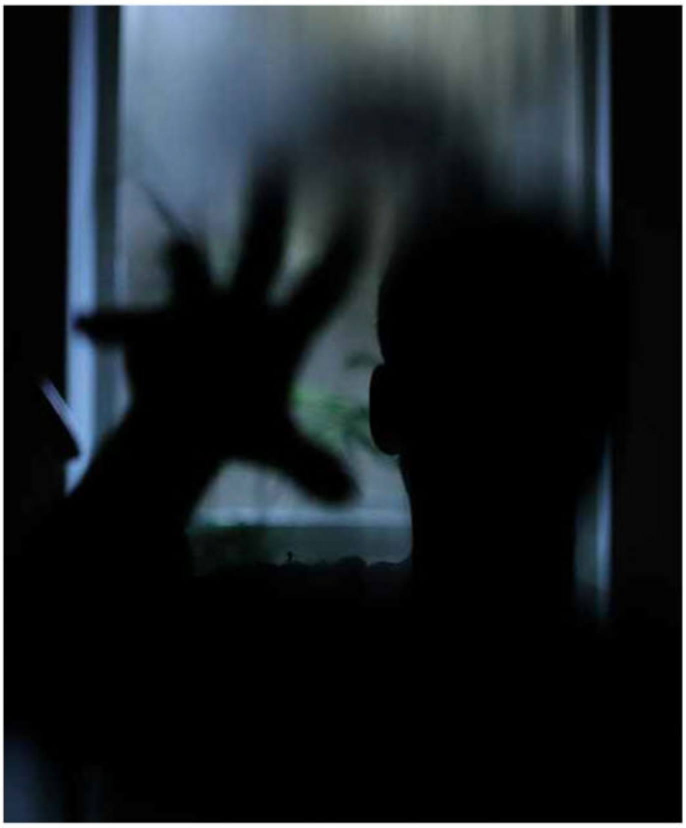
Watching over me

This is a true story, as a lot of my friends and family would tell you.

One day in 1989, when I was a nine-year-old in primary school, I was playing with the younger year school group when I saw what looked like the end of a very long black cape go past the classroom window. As far as I know, I was the only one who saw this; I didn't mention it to anyone. I saw the end of the cape a few more times at school. Then I saw it as I was walking down an old railway track. Starting to get bit scared, I told my mum. She said not to worry about it, but she would keep an eye out.

A few weeks went past and I began to forget about it until one night I was in my room. I had a little black-and-white TV on a seat by my bedroom door. The TV had knobs you had to turn to get to each channel. I must have been sitting in front of it for about five minutes trying to find a channel, which was strange as I had never had trouble finding one before. Then my brother came and stood in the doorway and started chatting to me. I wasn't really looking at him, just talking to him, but at the same time trying to sort out my TV. Then when I did look at him he said I went as white as a sheet and looked terrified. Just behind my brother's shoulder I saw a terrifying faceless figure covered head to toe in black. I screamed at the top of my voice, and as you can imagine scared the holy hell out of my brother. As I screamed, the figure appeared to retreat into my sister's bedroom, next to mine. My brother didn't believe in ghosts until that night.

A few weeks later, I was having a sleepover at my house with a couple of friends. Amy and I were on my bed having a really good laugh and Nicola was sitting at the bottom of my bed talking to us with her back to my open bedroom door, when I saw the black figure again in the doorway looking straight at me. Even though it had no face, I knew it was looking at me. As I screamed it disappeared again, as if my screaming was scaring it. Mum suggested it was trying to get my attention or just looking out for me as it didn't seem to want to hurt me, but I really didn't like it, whatever its motives.



ETIENNE GILFILLAN

"Just behind my brother's shoulder I saw a terrifying figure..."

Then one night I was sent to bed while the rest of my family were downstairs. I went to sleep with my door open but woke when I felt the end of my duvet being lifted up to reveal my feet. I lay frozen with fear. Even though this was the type of trick my brother would have pulled, I knew that it wasn't him because even the slightest of movements would have made the floorboards creek. All I remember after that was waking up the next morning feeling so glad that it was morning.

On my 16th birthday I had a friend staying over. That night when I was in the bathroom I heard her talking to someone. I left the bathroom and walked into my bedroom, expecting to find someone else with her, but all I saw was her looking quite shaken. She said she had seen a black figure walking out of the bathroom and across the landing. As she thought it was me, she started talking to me, but when I didn't walk into the bedroom she went out onto the landing to see where I was, but I was still in the bathroom. After that, any of my friends who stayed the night always saw something when they were left alone. Who knows? It might have been the black figure checking up on them.

When I turned 18 I was with a friend of mine in their house and one of their neighbours walked in. He asked me where I was from, and I mentioned my parents' house. He then asked me if I had heard of the ghost that used to haunt the house and seemed to look after the children that were there before we moved in. I was shocked and relieved that it wasn't just me going mad. He told me that before the house was a pub it was a monastery and that the black figure that haunted the house was a monk.

In 2007 I had some private paranormal investigators – !Spooks Paranormal! as they were called – come to the family house as my father was selling it and I wanted to get closure before it was sold. They picked up on no fewer than eleven spirits and in my bedroom one of the psychics, encountering a spectral monk called Father Francis, sank to his knees and started to pray. By this point I had left the room in tears, but was asked to return. The monk needed me to say that he was forgiven for scaring me and that he was only trying to protect me. I said it was OK and the psychic then came out of his trance. I should point out that the investigators were not told anything about the house beforehand.

Victoria Price
By email

Almost skeletal

At Hallowe'en in 1993, when I was seven, I was dressed as Wee Willy Winky, waiting to go out 'guizing' or trick-or-treating for sweets with my brother. He was also dressed up in costume, watching TV in our parents' room. Impatient to get going, I wandered back and forth between that room and my brother's bedroom, which was in pitch darkness. Returning to his room for the fourth or fifth time, I heard an odd sound and was confronted by a huge, darkly clad figure standing in the centre of the room. The closet door, previously closed, was now wide open. I couldn't make out any facial features and was too scared to turn on the light. The figure was very thin, almost skeletal, with long, snowy-white hair that seemed to sway as if blown by a breeze. 'He' was motionless apart from the chest, which expanded and contracted, suggesting breathing. As far as I can remember, the figure just vanished and I closed the closet door with a slam. I am not sure what or who 'he' was, whether 'he' was malevolent or just passing through.

Later that night there was a terrible thunderstorm. We were sitting in the car waiting to go to my primary school's Hallowe'en party when a neighbour's tree was struck by lightning about 3m (10ft) from where the car was parked outside our front gate. I was sitting in the left hand passenger seat and it was almost as if the bolt were aimed at me.

Martyn Jamieson
By email

POLICE
THE ILLUS
LAW COURTS AND WEE
DIEU ET
HONI

JAN BONDESON presents more sensational stories and startling Victorian images from the "worst newspaper in England" – the *Illustrated Police News.*

53. NEWFOUNDLAND DOGS TO THE RESCUE!

Throughout Victorian times, Newfoundland dogs were very highly regarded, mainly due to their ability to save human lives during shipwrecks or bathing accidents. The struggle between life and death, with the helpless human in the hands of the hostile elements, when a compassionate brute creature takes man's side and brings him to safety, was a subject that fascinated the Victorians. Heroic Newfoundland dogs were depicted in schoolbooks, popular engravings, and books on natural history. These dogs were considered not just brave and altruistic, but also extremely intelligent. A large proportion of the anecdotes about dogs told and re-told by the early Victorian dog-fanciers were related to the extraordinary sagacity of the Newfoundland. To the sentimental Victorian naturalist, these dogs were not just superior to all other members of the canine tribe, but also more admirable than non-human primates. Apes and monkeys were viewed with suspicion at this time: did these filthy monkeys not hide their nuts in an unmentionable place, and did the great apes not have lurid designs on white women?

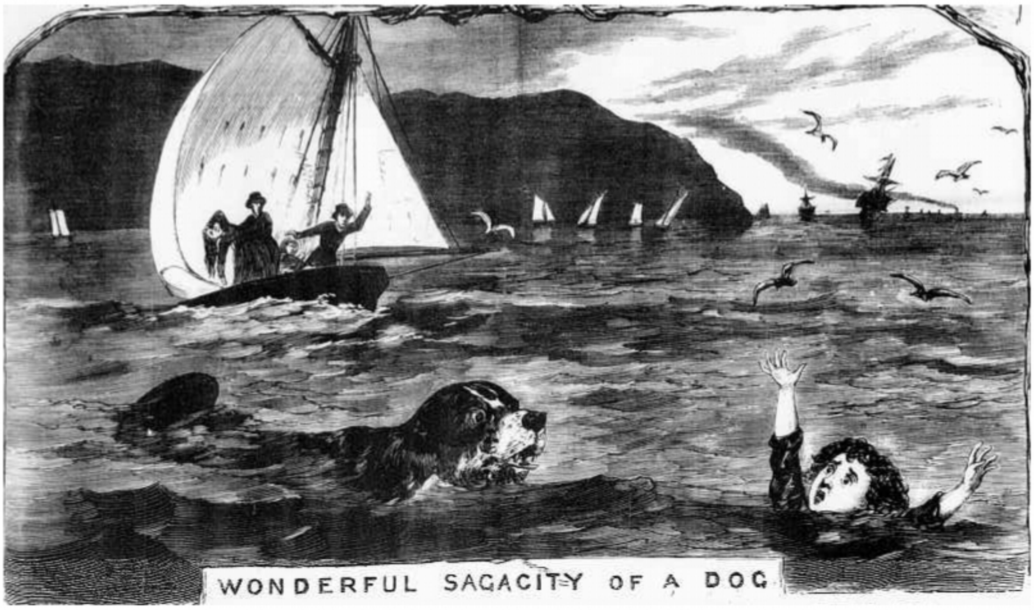
In Victorian collections of dog stories, and in children's books and magazines, wise and altruistic Newfoundland dogs make use of their superior intellects to protect children, catch thieves, and rescue people from various calamities. If an imprudent child is in danger from drowning, fire, or falling down a precipice, a sagacious Newfoundland is never far away. If burglars or robbers are up to mischief, the watchful Newfoundland drives them away. The Cult of the Newfoundland dog in popular culture reigned supreme throughout the 19th century, not just in Britain but in most European countries, even those where Newfoundland dogs were extremely scarce, like Sweden. Some authors have suspected that this cult rests on far from solid foundations. Some of the unreferenced old yarns about super-intelligent Newfoundland dogs read more or less like fairy tales; were they equally devoid of factual foundation?

So, how many *true* stories of sagacious and lifesaving Newfoundlands are there? The answer has to be: certainly very many! These dogs have a powerful instinct to retrieve objects from the water, and to save people struggling to swim, and they were several times featured in the columns of the *Illustrated Police News*. In July 1868, Mrs Jane Titherleigh, the wife of a Hull ironmaster, was taking a cruise with her little son in a small sailing boat when the boy suddenly fell overboard. Consternation ruled among the humans, since they were all indifferent swimmers, but a Newfoundland dog leapt into the water without being prompted in any way, swam up to the young lad, and dragged him back to the vessel. The boy was none the worse for his ducking, but Mrs Titherleigh fell into hysterics.

In February 1872, some watchmen on duty at Sable Island, off Nova Scotia, saw a large Newfoundland dog come walking up to them. Although the dog seemed quite exhausted, it whined as if it wanted them to follow it. The Newfoundland led the men to the shore, but it was becoming very dark. One of the watchmen had the idea of letting the dog hold a lantern in its mouth to guide them, and the dog willingly obliged. The Newfoundland led them to a woman and a child, both half dead from their privations. It was the wife and daughter of Captain Fletcher, of the Liverpool barque *Lilly Parker*, which had been shipwrecked nearby. When the ship had sunk, Mrs Fletcher had hung on to her little daughter with one hand, and to the Newfoundland dog's collar with the other. After the powerful dog had dragged them ashore, the clever animal had spontaneously gone to look for help.

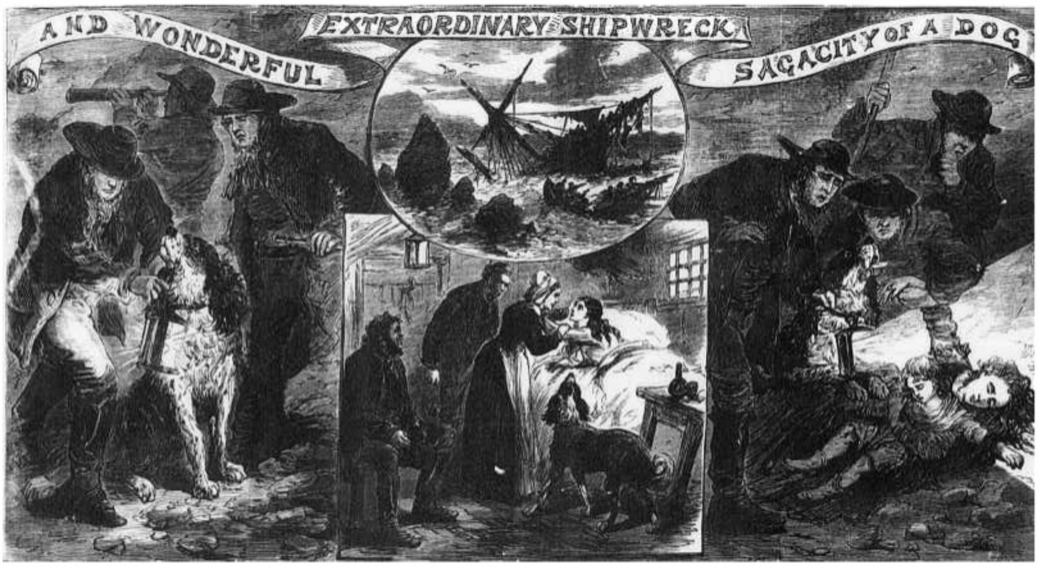
In June 1875, some children were sitting on the Thames embankment near Waterloo. A gust of wind suddenly blew a little girl into the river, where she could be seen to be struggling. A gentleman passing by unleashed his Newfoundland dog, appropriately named Ready, and made the dog aware of the girl's situation. Without further prompting, the dog leapt into Thames, seized the girl by the collar of her cape, and swam to the stairs nearby.

In June 1896, some children were playing on the tram lines


WONDERFUL SAGACITY OF A DOG

ABOVE: A sagacious Newfoundland dog saves a child from drowning, from the *Illustrated Police News*, 4 July 1868. Note the swooning Mrs Titherleigh in the background.

TRATED
NEWS
KLY RECORD
ON DROIT



ABOVE: The clever Newfoundland saving Mrs Fletcher and her daughter, from *IPN* 30 March 1872.

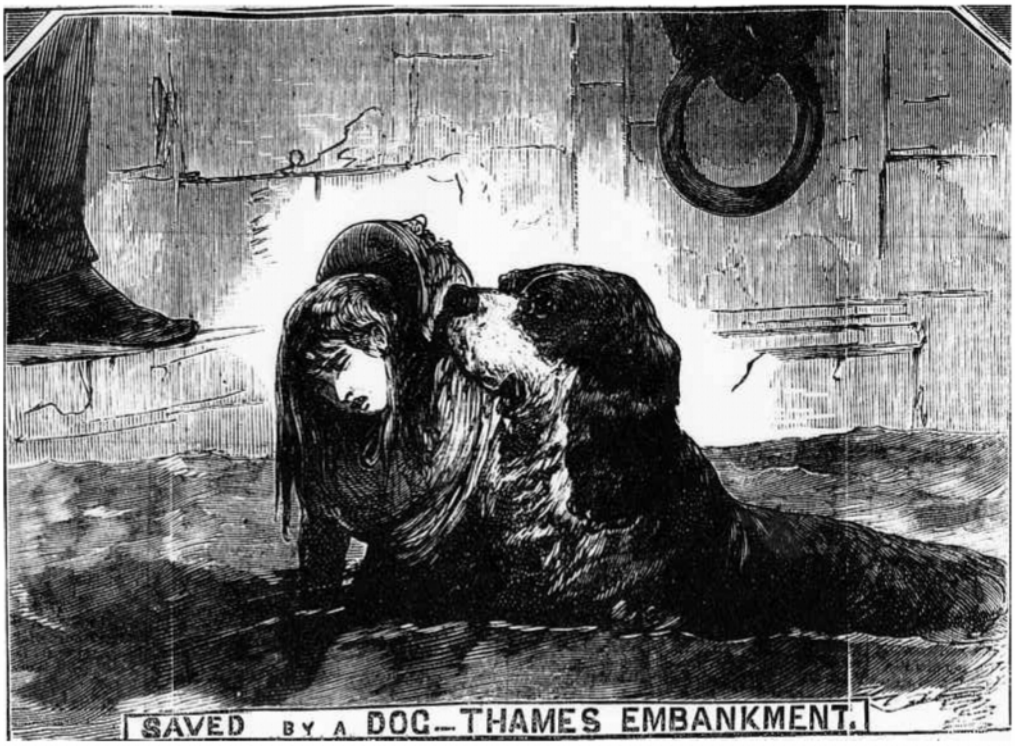
near Daubhill Mill, Bolton. They were watched by a Newfoundland bitch named Princess May, lying down in front of the door of her master's house. But when the tram-car approached at a brisk pace, one of the children fell down in front of it. The driver desperately tried to rein in the horses, and people shouted with alarm, but Princess May dashed across the road, grabbed the three-year-old boy by his frock, and pulled him to safety. When some journalists were incredulous at this novel instance of Newfoundland dog sagacity, they were taken to task by Mr Fred Lomax, the secretary of the Bolton and District Humane Society, who had carefully collected witness testimony of the rescue. He, too, had initially doubted this extraordinary story, but four witnesses unanimously stated that Princess May had acted independently and that she had been clearly seen to drag the boy to safety before any human rescuer could reach him.

The boy himself, the three-year-old son of Mr T Hurst, of 10 Stainsbury Street, Daubhill, was tracked down by Mr Lomax, as was Mr T Baxendale, of 18 Oak Street, who had run to pick up the child when the dog came bounding up to carry it out of danger. Princess May herself was a sturdy black Newfoundland bitch, the property of Mr JH Edge, of Daubhill. He told a journalist that his dog had once won a prize at a dog show in Dublin; she was very fond of children, and a good swimmer and plunger. The Newfoundland dog which used to walk in front of the local Artillery Band was the brother of this splendid animal. In November, Princess May appeared at a Humane Society presentation ceremony at Bolton Town Hall, along with 11 humans who had performed various heroics. Lord Stanley MP and the Mayor of Bolton presented them with a silver medal each; the dog also received a silver collar so she could wear her medal in a becoming manner. The next month, Princess May was the guest of honour at a grand dog show in London, walking round the ring to show off her collar and medal.

In my book *Those Amazing Newfoundland Dogs*, I have collected 12 primary newspaper accounts of Newfoundlands being ordered by their masters to leap into the water and rescue a drowning person. Furthermore, there are not less than 18 newspaper stories of these dogs spontaneously plunging into the water to go to the rescue, without any human command. The majority of these accounts provide the place, the name of the person rescued, and sometimes even the name of the dog and its owner. Most of these accounts were published in good-quality newspapers, and appeared in more than one version, each by different journalists, providing additional credibility. There are also four primary newspaper accounts of Newfoundlands either swimming to shore from a ship carrying a rope, or swimming from shore with a rope to a stricken vessel.

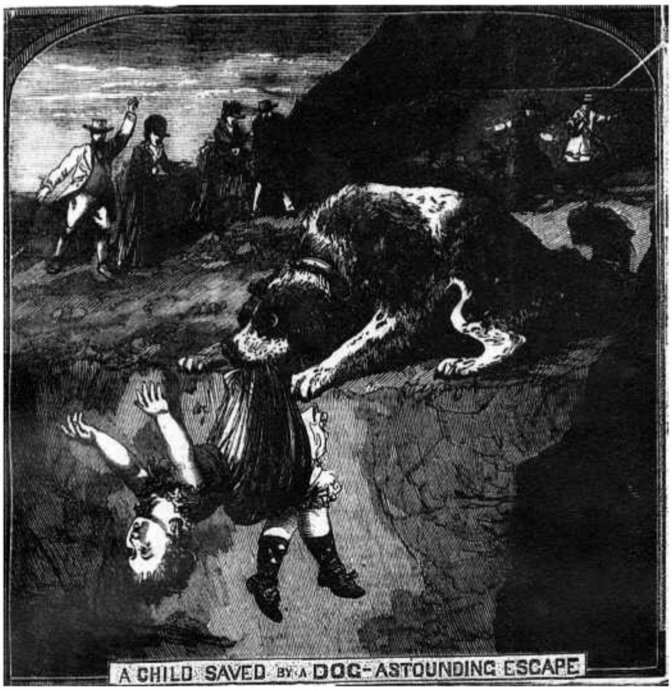
The English dog breeder and writer on dogs Rawdon Lee found it peculiar that so many early Victorian authors extolled the superior intellect of the Newfoundland dog; in his opinion, they were much like other dogs. He has had support from Professor Stanley Coren's influential *The Intelligence of Dogs*, which ranks the Newfoundland as number 34 out of 78 breeds, with regard to obedience and working intelligence. The Victorian dog fanciers would have considered this an insult to their favoured breed. Nor have some of the present-day Newfoundland dog enthusiasts appreciated Professor Coren's ranking, objecting that intelligence does not equal obedience. They have pointed out that although the Newfoundland is hampered by its independent nature and short attention span, the dogs are definitely more clever than most large breeds, particularly with regard to problem solving. An anecdote in Professor Coren's book would support their case: a tired Newfoundland bitch was annoyed by a yapping little Maltese terrier wanting to play. In the end, the great black dog seized the little terrier by the scruff of the neck and walked out to the bathroom. Here she deposited it into a large, empty bathtub, where it was securely confined, before contentedly returning and settling down to sleep. This not only shows a very good example of creative action in dogs, but also that the old stories of sagacious Newfoundlands ducking annoying little dogs in ponds or ditches are likely to be true.

Professor Coren also has a very low opinion of the Newfoundland as a watchdog. In my opinion, this is true for most bitches, and also many male dogs, due to their placid and friendly nature, and lack of suspicion towards strangers. Any burglar who takes on a large and alert Newfoundland male guarding his territory, and being protective of the other members of the household, may well be mistaken to rely too much on the Professor's advice, however. It is curious to note that many of the early Newfoundland dogs in Britain, Lord Byron's Boatswain prominent among them, were known for their pugnacious



SAVED BY A DOG—THAMES EMBANKMENT.

LEFT: A Newfoundland dog saves a child from drowning in the Thames, from the *IPN*, 8 September 1883. **BELOW LEFT:** A Newfoundland dog saves the boy James Alford from falling down a precipice, from the *IPN*, 18 November 1876.



A CHILD SAVED BY A DOG–ASTOUNDING ESCAPE

nature. According to many sources, they were also excellent watchdogs: vigilant and wary of strangers. In 'Newfoundland Dogs in the News', we have encountered many accounts of these dogs protecting their masters against robbers, or fighting off burglars. The *Times* newspaper provides many examples of burglars emerging second best from encounters with fierce Newfoundlands, and even reports of smugglers and thieves themselves keeping Newfoundlands to set on the police and customs officers.

To analyse the problem of the changing Newfoundland, it is it important to take into account the work of Professor Jasper Rine and his co-workers with regard to canine genetics. A Border Collie is a very intelligent dog, concentrated and intense; it has a strong herding instinct, crouching and 'giving eye' when it sees some recalcitrant sheep, or sometimes even a human being it considers to require some herding. The present-day Newfoundland is friendly and easygoing, has webbed feet and loves water, and holds its tail high. Rine and his colleagues cross-bred a male Border Collie with a Newfoundland bitch; the union of this mismatched couple produced seven healthy puppies, which were in turn bred with each other, resulting in a third generation of 23 'grandchildren'. These dogs exhibited a seemingly quite random combination of 'Border Collie' and 'Newfoundland' traits: for example, one of the dogs might be very intelligent but also friendly and easygoing, holding its tail high but hating water, and possessing the herding instinct to 'give eye'. It is important that the typical traits of these dogs appear to be inherited separately.

With these arguments in mind, let us return to the early Newfoundland dogs. These were selectively bred to have webbed feet and a talent for water work, but also to be intelligent and altruistic, with a strong instinct to rescue any person falling into the water. The dogs also needed to be watchful and wary of strangers, not fearful to 'have a scrap', and ready to defend their masters. Unlike the sheepdogs, mainly trained to follow the signals of their masters, the working Newfoundlands were bred to take initiatives of their own; it would not do if the ship's dog stood waiting for orders when a net full of fish was lost, or a sailor drowned. Understandably, these remarkable dogs were widely admired in Georgian and Victorian Britain. The stories of Newfoundland sagacity recounted here and in my book are only the tip of the iceberg; it is no wonder these amazing dogs were so widely featured in magazines, children's books and books of anecdotes on natural history. We will never know what genetic event triggered the development of these remarkably intelligent early Newfoundland dogs.

A recent study aimed to determine whether dogs would seek help from a bystander if their owner feigned a heart attack, or pretended to be trapped underneath a falling bookcase; they did not. There is a marked contrast between these very ordinary dogs standing by uselessly while their owner was in trouble and the heroics of the Newfoundlands described here – for example, the extraordinary Princess May, not just sensing danger to the child on the tram line but taking appropriate action with commendable alacrity. There was clearly something special about Newfoundlands in those days, something that set them apart from other breeds.

With time, the Newfoundland fanciers valued different qualities in their dogs, and adapted their breeding accordingly. For example, since they were not used as watchdogs, there was no need for them to be watchful and wary of strangers; in recent times, the dogs have become increasingly placid and friendly, not just to their owners, but to everyone else. A calm and stolid temperament, great size and solid black fur were considered valuable characteristics, whereas the spirit and watchfulness formerly exhibited by the dogs was no longer appreciated. It would appear that selective breeding in the last 150 years has led to the Newfoundland dogs losing a good deal of their pugnacity and guarding instinct along the way – and also some of the intelligence for which these amazing dogs were once rightly admired.

For more on Newfoundland dogs, see 'Doggy Dramas' by Jan Bondeson, **FT300:44-49** and his book *Those Amazing Newfoundland Dogs* (CFZ Press 2012) from which the above material is adapted.

UNDERWEAR FOR NINJAS

SMUGGLING DUDS

THE CORE COLLECTION

ABSTRACT - CARBON DIGI-CAM - JUNGLE CAMO - SKULL CHECK

SUPER STEALTH2.0
FOR CO-OP MISSIONS

Get 15% off orders at SmugglingDuds.com with discount code - FORTEAN15

reader info

how to subscribe

ANNUAL SUB of 12 issues (inc p&p) UK £39.98; EC £47.50; USA $89.99 ($161.98 for 24 issues); Rest of World £55.
Visit http://subscribe.forteantimes.com/ to subscribe online.

North America (US & Canada)

Subscribers should contact: IMS. 3330 Pacific Avenue, Suite 404, Virginia Beach, VA 23454, USA. Tel: 800-428 3003 (toll free); Fax: 757 428 6253; Or order online at www.imsnews.com.

UK, Europe & rest of world

Major credit cards accepted. Cheques or money orders should be in sterling, preferably drawn on a London bank and made payable to Dennis Publishing.
Mail to: **Fortean Times** Dovetail Services, 800 Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, ME9 8GU, UK. NB: This address should be used for orders and subscriptions only.
Telephone payments and queries: 0844 844 0049.
Fax payments and queries: 0844 815 0866.
E-mail payments and queries: ForteanTimes@servicehelpline.co.uk

how to submit

Dennis Publishing reserves all rights to reuse material submitted by *FT* readers and contributors in any medium or format.

Illustrations

Contact the art director by email (etienne@forteantimes.com) before sending samples of work. We cannot guarantee to respond to unsolicited work, though every effort will be made to do so.

Article submissions

Please send all submissions to David Sutton, Editor, Fortean Times, PO BOX 71602, London E17 0QD, UK or email drsutton@forteantimes.com. As we receive a large volume of submissions, a decision may not be immediate.

Letters

Letters of comment or about experiences are welcome. Send to PO Box 2409, London NW5 4NP, UK or email sieveking@forteantimes.com. We reserve the right to edit submissions.

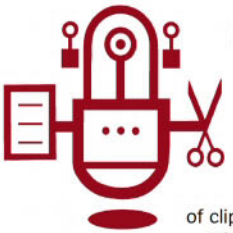
Books, periodicals and other material for review

Send to: Fortean Times, PO Box 2409, London NW5 4NP, UK.

Caveat

FT aims to present the widest range of interpretations to stimulate discussion and welcomes helpful criticism. The opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the editors. *FT* can take no responsibility for submissions, but will take all reasonable care of material in its possession. Requests for return of material should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope or an International Reply Coupon.

We occasionally use material that has been placed in the public domain. It is not always possible to identify the copyright holder. If you claim credit for something we've published, we'll be pleased to make acknowledgement.



Clippers wanted!

Regular clipsters have provided the lifeblood of *Fortean Times* since it began in 1973. One of the delights for the editors is receiving packets of clips from Borneo or Brazil, Saudi Arabia or Siberia. We invite you to join in the fun and send in anything weird, from trade journals, local newspapers, extracts from obscure tomes, or library newspaper archives.

To minimise the time spent on preparing clippings for a Fort Sort, we ask that you cut them out and not fold them too small. Mark each clip (on the front, where possible) with the source, date and your name, so that we can credit you in the listing (right) when we use the material. For UK local and overseas clips, please give the town of publication. For foreign language clips, we appreciate brief translations. To avoid confusion over day and month, please write the date in this form: 1 JAN 2017. If you send photocopies, copy on one side of the paper only.

Mail to: Fortean Times, PO Box 2409, London NW5 4NP, UK
E-mail: sieveking@forteantimes.com
or post on the FT website at www.forteantimes.com

Why Fortean?

Fortean Times is a monthly magazine of news, reviews and research on strange phenomena and experiences, curiosities, prodigies and portents. It was founded by Bob Rickard in 1973 to continue the work of Charles Fort (1874–1932).

Born of Dutch stock in Albany, New York, Fort spent many years researching scientific literature in the New York Public Library and the British Museum Library. He marshalled his evidence and set forth his philosophy in *The Book of the Damned* (1919), *New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931), and *Wild Talents* (1932).

He was sceptical of scientific explanations, observing how scientists argued according to their own beliefs rather than the rules of evidence and that inconvenient data were ignored, suppressed, discredited or explained away. He criticised modern science for its reductionism, its attempts to define, divide and separate. Fort's dictum "One measures a circle beginning anywhere" expresses instead his philosophy of Continuity in which everything is in an intermediate and transient state between extremes.

He had ideas of the Universe-as-organism and the transient nature of all apparent phenomena, coined the term 'teleportation', and was perhaps the first to speculate that mysterious lights seen in the sky might be craft from outer space. However, he cut at the very roots of credulity: "I conceive of nothing, in religion, science or philosophy, that is more than the proper thing to wear, for a while."

Fort was by no means the first person to collect anomalies and oddities – such collections have abounded from Greece to China since ancient times. **Fortean Times** keeps alive this ancient task of dispassionate weird-watching, exploring the wild frontiers between the known and the unknown.

From the viewpoint of mainstream science, its function is elegantly stated in a line from Enid Welsford's book on the mediæval fool: "The Fool does not lead a revolt against the Law; he lures us into a region of the spirit where... the writ does not run."

Besides being a journal of record, **FT** is also a forum for the discussion of observations and ideas, however absurd or unpopular, and maintains a position of benevolent scepticism towards both the orthodox and unorthodox.

FT toes no party line.

Special Correspondents

AUSTRALIA Graham Cordon (SA), Tony Healy (ACT), John Palazzi (NSW), Len Watson (Qld). **CANADA** Brian Chapman (BC), Graham Conway (BC), **CYBERSPACE** Richard Alexander, John F Callahan, Hugh Henry, Steve Scanlon, Janet Wilson. **ENGLAND** Gail-Nina Anderson, Louise Bath, James Beckett, Claire Blamey, Peter Christie, Mat Coward, Kate Eccles, Paul Farthing, George Featherston, Paul Gallagher, Alan Gardiner, Keith George, Anne Hardwick, Richard Lowke, Alexis Lykiard, Diana Lyons, Dave Malin, Nick Maloret, Valerie Martin, Tom Ruffles, Meryl Santis, Paul Screeton, Gary Stocker, Roman Suchyj, Frank Thomas, Paul Thomas, Nick Warren, Owen Whiteoak, Bobby Zodiac. **FRANCE** Michel Meurger. **GERMANY** Ulrich Magin. **HOLLAND** Robin Pascoe. **IRELAND** Andy Conlon, Pat Corcoran, Andrew Munro. **ISRAEL** Zvi Ron. **NEW ZEALAND** Peter Hassall. **ROMANIA** Iosif Boczor. **SCOTLAND** Roger Musson. **SWEDEN** Sven Rosén. **THAILAND** Chris Williams. **USA** Loren Coleman (ME), Jim Conlan (CT), Myron Hoyt (ME), Greg May (FL), Dolores Phelps (TX), Jim Riecken (NY), Joseph Trainor (MA), Jeffrey Vallance (CA), Gary Yates (UT). **WALES** Janet & Colin Bord.

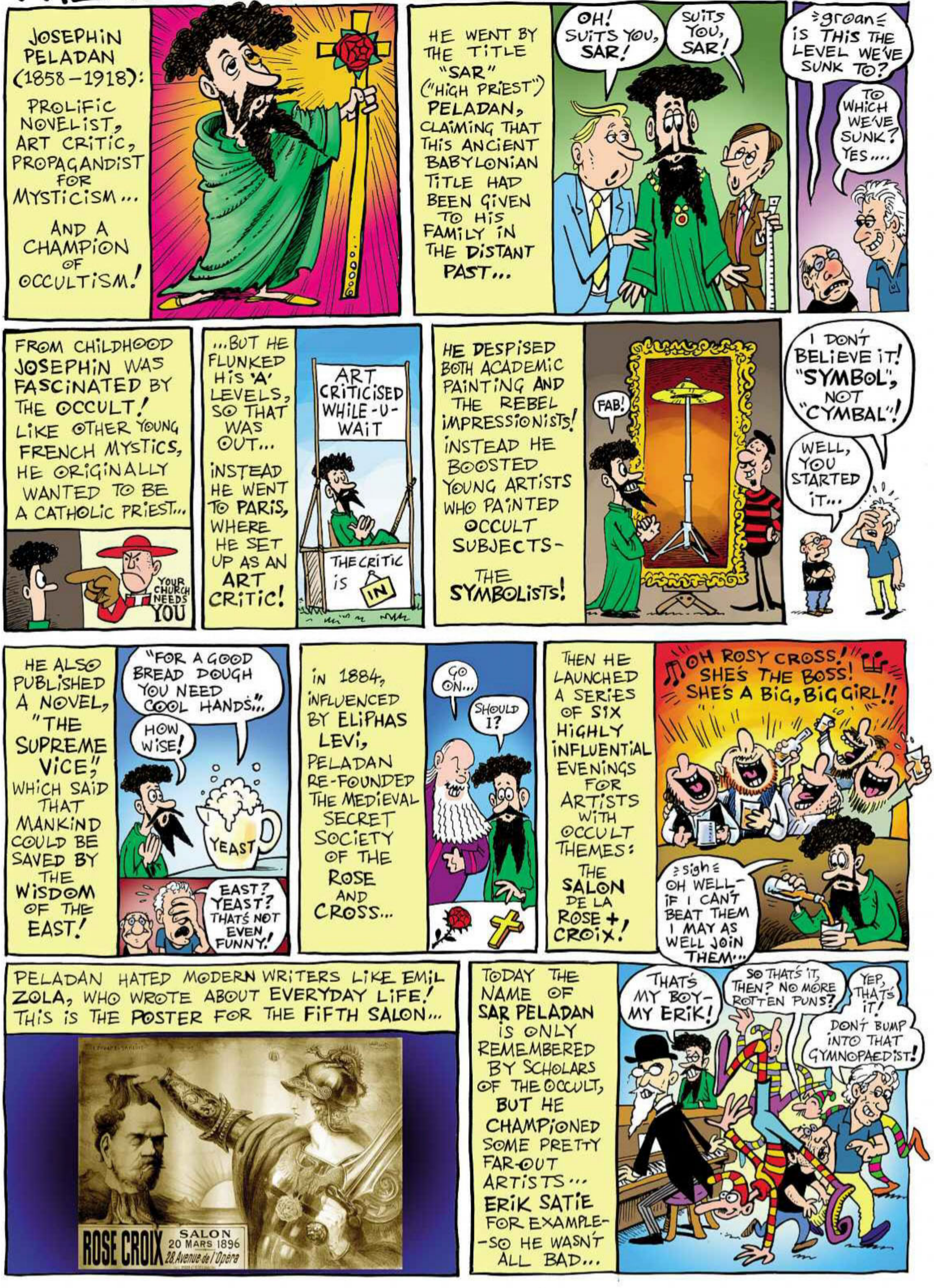
Clipping Credits for FT349

Richard Alexander, Gerard Apps, Chris Aspin, David V Barrett, Louise Bath, James Beckett, Brian Chapman, Peter Christie, Terry Colvin, Andy Conlon, Pat Corcoran, Mike Dash, Charlotte Davies, John H Evans, Alan Gardiner, Keith George, Hugh Henry, Kevin Hubbard, Colin Ings, Bill & Louise Kelly, Robin Lee, Diana Lyons, Dave Malin, Nick Maloret, Valerie Martin, Greg May, John Palazzi, Tom Ruffles, Tony Smith, Frank Thomas, Pam Thornton, Chris Tye, Carole Tyrrell, Nicholas Warren, Len Watson, Owen Whiteoak, Janet Wilson, Gary Yates.

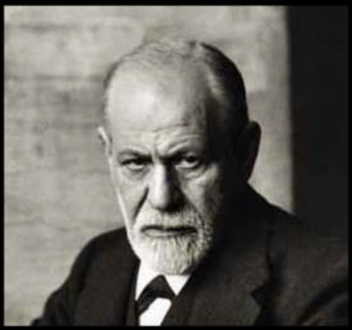
PHENOMENOMIX

SAR PELADAN

HUNT EMERSON and KEVIN JACKSON


JOSEPHIN PELADAN (1858–1918): PROLIFIC NOVELIST, ART CRITIC, PROPAGANDIST FOR MYSTICISM...
AND A CHAMPION OF OCCULTISM!
HE WENT BY THE TITLE "SAR" ("HIGH PRIEST") PELADAN, CLAIMING THAT THIS ANCIENT BABYLONIAN TITLE HAD BEEN GIVEN TO HIS FAMILY IN THE DISTANT PAST...
OH! SUITS YOU, SAR!
SUITS YOU, SAR!
groan IS THIS THE LEVEL WE'VE SUNK TO?
TO WHICH WE'VE SUNK? YES....
FROM CHILDHOOD JOSEPHIN WAS FASCINATED BY THE OCCULT! LIKE OTHER YOUNG FRENCH MYSTICS, HE ORIGINALLY WANTED TO BE A CATHOLIC PRIEST...
YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU
...BUT HE FLUNKED HIS 'A' LEVELS, SO THAT WAS OUT...
INSTEAD HE WENT TO PARIS, WHERE HE SET UP AS AN ART CRITIC!
ART CRITICISED WHILE-U-WAIT
THE CRITIC IS IN
HE DESPISED BOTH ACADEMIC PAINTING AND THE REBEL IMPRESSIONISTS! INSTEAD HE BOOSTED YOUNG ARTISTS WHO PAINTED OCCULT SUBJECTS–
THE SYMBOLISTS!
FAB!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! "SYMBOL", NOT "CYMBAL"!
WELL, YOU STARTED IT...
HE ALSO PUBLISHED A NOVEL, "THE SUPREME VICE," WHICH SAID THAT MANKIND COULD BE SAVED BY THE WISDOM OF THE EAST!
"FOR A GOOD BREAD DOUGH YOU NEED COOL HANDS"...
HOW WISE!
YEAST
EAST? YEAST? THAT'S NOT EVEN FUNNY!
IN 1884, INFLUENCED BY ELIPHAS LEVI, PELADAN RE-FOUNDED THE MEDIEVAL SECRET SOCIETY OF THE ROSE AND CROSS...
GO ON...
SHOULD I?
THEN HE LAUNCHED A SERIES OF SIX HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL EVENINGS FOR ARTISTS WITH OCCULT THEMES: THE SALON DE LA ROSE + CROIX!
OH ROSY CROSS! SHE'S THE BOSS! SHE'S A BIG, BIG GIRL!!
sigh OH WELL– IF I CAN'T BEAT THEM I MAY AS WELL JOIN THEM...
PELADAN HATED MODERN WRITERS LIKE EMIL ZOLA, WHO WROTE ABOUT EVERYDAY LIFE! THIS IS THE POSTER FOR THE FIFTH SALON...
ROSE CROIX SALON 20 MARS 1896 28 Avenue de l'Opéra
TODAY THE NAME OF SAR PELADAN IS ONLY REMEMBERED BY SCHOLARS OF THE OCCULT, BUT HE CHAMPIONED SOME PRETTY FAR-OUT ARTISTS... ERIK SATIE FOR EXAMPLE– –SO HE WASN'T ALL BAD...
THAT'S MY BOY– MY ERIK!
SO THAT'S IT, THEN? NO MORE ROTTEN PUNS?
YEP, THAT'S IT!
DON'T BUMP INTO THAT GYMNOPAEDIST!

COMING NEXT MONTH



AGAINST THE BLACK TIDE

WAS SIGMUND FREUD SCARED OF THE OCCULT?

AWAY WITH THE FAIRIES

THE TAKING OF DR MOORE AND HOW HE RETURNED

+

TRUMP THE ALIEN, DANCES WITH DEVILS, SASQUATCH SMELLS, AND MUCH MORE…

FORTEAN TIMES 350

ON SALE 2 FEB 2017

STRANGE DEATHS

UNUSUAL WAYS OF SHUFFLING OFF THIS MORTAL COIL

On 21 October, Steven Allford, a 51-year-old English rough sleeper, was found dead with one hand and one leg bound to a bench with plastic ties and his trousers pulled down near Malaga Airport in Spain. There was a slice of ham on each buttock and his genitals were wedged into an open tuna can. He was identified by documents found among belongings in a trolley next to his body. At first the police speculated it might be a "'stag do prank gone wrong" or some kind of hate crime, but eventually decided Allford was "killed by another tramp in a row over food". A week later, a giant Finnish vagrant, said to be aged around 50, was arrested on suspicion of Allford's manslaughter. However, the Finn denied any involvement in Allford's death or the desecration of his body; and a post-mortem showed Allford, who had done prison time in Spain for fraud, had probably choked to death on his own vomit after a heavy drinking session. Acquaintances of the pair said the dead man had had fallouts with other vagrants because he expected to share their food but wouldn't reciprocate when he had something to eat. It was unclear whether he was tied to the bench before or after he died, but the binds probably contributed to his death even if there was no intention to end his life. *mirror.co.uk, dailymail.co.uk, 23+30 Oct 2016.*

On 24 October, a four-year-old girl went missing from her home in upper Assam, a mostly tribal state in northeast India. On 7 November, the child's body was found in a forest about 75 to 90 yards from the Ratanpur tea estate where she lived with her parents. She had been decapitated and her arms had been severed. Both her arms and her head were found near the body on the forest floor. The dismembering was allegedly the result of a 14-year-old girl, who lived in the same village, losing her mobile phone. Wanting it back, her parents – Hanuman Bhumij and his wife, Many Bhumij – turned to black magic. Gul Muhammad Ali, also known as Gulam, a tantric or "black witch priest", performed a ritual, assisted by his nephew Hajrat Ali and Ariful Haqmulla. Part of the ritual included sacrificing the little girl. The police arrested Hanuman, Many and Gulam's assistants, but Gulam himself escaped. Everyone involved, including the deceased child, are Adivasis, descendants of indigenous people in India who have been the objects of discrimination and exploitation in India for years.

Last June, a 55-year-old man was beheaded in a rural village in Jharkhand, a state in eastern India. The offering was meant to bring about a better harvest and more timely rains. Police believe that the crime was carried out by the Orkas or Mudkatwa, which the *Hindustan Times* reported is "an occultist group that buries human heads in paddy fields for better rains and harvest." *Washington Post, 8 Nov 2016.*

Following an argument over a cheeseburger on 5 May, Benjamin Middendorf, 25, shot and killed his brother Nicholas, 28, at their family home in St Cloud, Florida. *D.Telegraph, 10 May 2016.*

After a drunken quarrel in the Russian city of Cheboksary, a 63-year-old man murdered his 66-year-old friend with a sledgehammer for insulting his accordion skills. The body remained in the man's home for three days, at which point he decided to use an axe to dismember his old friend, sneaking out pieces of the body in suitcases and rubbish bags. He failed to dispose of the body parts carefully, however, and they were soon discovered outside his apartment building. The man then fled to a nearby village, where he spent several hours resisting arrest, armed with a pitchfork. Eventually, he surrendered and confessed. He even left some pieces of the victim in his apartment, telling officers he grew tired of carrying the body parts downstairs. *Moscow Times, 31 Oct 2016.*

A woman accused of being a witch was burnt alive on a bonfire in an indigenous community in a remote part of the Amazonian rainforest in Peru. Members of the Shiringamazu Alto community sentenced Rosa Villar Jarionca to death over claims she made people sick through witchcraft. The alleged burning took place on 20 September. A video shot by a witness with a mobile phone appeared to show Villar with her hands tied amid a pile of dry logs and branches. A man pours petrol on the logs and someone else throws a lit match on the bonfire. Villar can be heard screaming. *(Queensland) Courier Mail, 29 Sept 2016.*

Another victim met a fiery death on 8 October for allegedly practising witchcraft in Uganda. The 57-year-old man, a butcher, was burned alive in his grass thatched house. Ingenious Dragudu, the acting district police chief commander, said three suspects had been arrested. "Some of us never wanted the man to be burnt but the angry mob overpowered us, locked him inside the house and set it ablaze," said an eyewitness. "By the time the police arrived, it was too late because the man had been burnt already." Witchdoctors have been the source of suspicion and concern in Uganda for quite some time. They are said to convince wealthy people that "sacrifices" will boost their wealth. Those wealthy people and businessmen pay thousands of pounds to then mutilate children, who are left to die without genitals and with slices in their heads. *ibtimes.com, 10 Oct 2016.*

A computer pioneer died at the exact time and date that he was born, 103 years earlier. Jimmy Newell was born in Leeds to the sound of bells ringing at midday on 11 October 1913. He died in Torbay Hospital with his son Graham holding his hand at the precise moment the clock struck noon on 11 October 2016. "My belief is that it was deliberate as he would never short-change anyone," said Graham, 65. Mr Newell, who lived in Dittisham, Devon, was a computer pioneer in World War II and was not allowed to enlist because his work was of "national importance". After the war he worked for Burroughs, a US company that played a major role in the computerisation of the banking industry. *D.Mail, Sun, 22 Oct 2016.*

WRITERS BUREAU CREATIVE WRITING COURSE

Why Not Be A Writer?

What our students say:

"I've been published in The Guardian and Good Life earning £400. And now I've got my first book published by Bloomsbury called MOB Rule: Lessons Learned by a Mother of Boys. The Writers Bureau course provided me with structure, stopped my procrastination but most importantly it provided the impetus to try something different."
Hannah Evans, Winchester

"My total earnings so far are £2,500."
Victor Wright, West Midlands

"When I started the Writers Bureau course, I wanted to explore avenues for my writing and develop and strengthen my personal style. I had no idea that it would lead to me being a published writer of novels and short stories. I still pinch myself when I receive emails and messages from readers who've enjoyed my work or when I give talks to book clubs and visit bookstores to do signings. These are magical moments that have changed my life – my dream has come true."
Jane Isaac, Northamptonshire

"As a result of my cricket articles, I have been elected into The Cricket Writers Club – an organisation that counts experienced journalists among its members. One of the perks of this membership is a press card that gives me entry into all of England's cricket stadium press boxes."
Martin Read, West Sussex

"I chose to sign with Ammonite Press, who had a reputation for producing high quality art and photography books."
Sarah Plater, Buckinghamshire

"When I first saw my words in print it was life changing. Someone else had read my work, believed in it, paid for it, and put it out there for others to see. As more articles made it to press, my confidence grew and I found I wanted to inject some of myself into my writing. At the time of writing this I have received £1,197 for my work."
Kris Roberts, Somerset

Being a writer can offer you a second income, extra spending money or it can even be a full-time career. It's your choice. But whatever your writing ambitions, we have a course that will help you to achieve them.

That's because our first-class home-study creative writing course contains all you need to know to become a successful, published writer. You learn how to write articles, short stories, novels, TV, radio, drama and more. You are shown how to develop your writing style, present your manuscripts, contact editors, find markets and HOW TO SELL YOUR WORK.

What's more, **you do not need any previous writing experience** to succeed on the course as it's suitable for the absolute beginner.

Throughout the course you will be **tutored by a professional writer**, who will offer constructive feedback on your twenty marked assignments. In addition, you can count on the support of our dedicated Student Services team who will do all they can to ensure that you get the most out of your studies.

When you enrol, your full course is sent to you on a **fifteen day trial**. Your studies are then flexible to your requirements. Moreover, we offer you a **full refund guarantee**. If you do not earn back the equivalent of your fees by the time you finish your course we will refund them in full.

So, if you would like to learn how to **earn from writing**, try our risk-free course. For a free prospectus visit our website or call our freephone number TODAY!

www.writersbureau.com

FREE CALL 24 ☎ HRS **0800 856 2008** Quote: AT117

YES! Please send me free details on how to become a successful freelance writer.

Name: ____________________

Address: ____________________

____

____________________ Postcode: __________

Email: ____________________

Freepost RSSK-JZAC-JCJG
The Writers Bureau
Dept AT117
Manchester, M3 1LE

TRUSTPILOT ★★★★★

Writers Bureau 28 Years of Success

www.facebook.com/thewritersbureau
www.twitter.com/writersbureau

Members of BILD and ABCC

email: 17W1@writersbureau.com Please include your name and address

Enrol online to access your course modules TODAY at: www.writersbureau.com

THE BEER
CARD GAME
HIP HOPS
SIREN CRAFT BREW
SOUNDWAVE, IPA
WOKINGHAM, ENGLAND
CHINOOK
COLUMBUS
SIMCOE
2013
66
5.6
SOUNDWAVE
IPA
'Hip Hops is a card game that ticks all the boxes: fun and easy to play, it's also educative and – the ever-important box – comes with a video that's got viral potential.'
IMBIBE MAGAZINE
'...attractive, creative, innovative'
BEVERAGE MASTER MAGAZINE
'Brilliant... Each card features a world-class beer (with a beautifully illustrated bottle)... think Top Trumps® with added twists'
ORIGINAL GRAVITY MAGAZINE
'LOVE these cards! Really fun to play, and I've learned so much more about beer thanks to them. Always easy to order at a pub because I go with something I recognize from Hip Hops — delicious every time!'
CUSTOMER REVIEW
★★★★★
FOLLOW
HIPHOPSCARDS

HIP HOPS

TheBeerCardGame.com

Fun and easy to learn, Hip Hops is the perfect gift for your beer-loving friends and family. Take Hip Hops on the go to play in the pub, on a train or at a beer festival.

FREE delivery with code FT16

Available at amazon

NOT ON THE HIGH STREET .com